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STUDIES IN PINSK JEWRY

BY

WOLF ZEEV RABINOWITSCH

HAIFA 1983



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The sources for these three Monographs are chapters written by the author
in the two books of the historical volume

"Pinsk"

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HISTORICAL COURSE OF THE PINSK COMMUNITY

FOUNDATIONS AND MOTIVES

The long history of the eternal people is marked by countless milestones. In every period, in every country and city where Jews have lived, the tenets of Judaism have been cherished and fostered by the group historically known as the "Community" (*kehillah*), or with greater emphasis, the "Holy Community" (*kehillah kedoshah*).

The first prerequisites for any knowledge of such a Jewish community are a study of its whole history — its origin, development, rise and decline or tragic destruction — and a scholarly assessment of this history, on the basis of documentary evidence and eye-witness reports which reflect the community's spiritual character and cultural values in social, economic and political terms.

Such a study provides us with valuable information not only about the community in question but also about the great majority of the other communities in the same "Land" (*erets*) or "State" (*medinah*) (cf. the Committee of the Four "Lands", the Communal Register of the "State" of Lithuania). Hence every scholarly investigation of a community and the consequent determination of that community's influence means the establishment of a further landmark in our knowledge of Jewish history, according to the community's size and relative importance. A study of this kind may also provide guidance and source-material for students of Jewish history as a whole.

*

Such is the awareness that has induced me to choose this way of commemorating the two communities of Pinsk and Karlin. I have sought to erect a lasting historical memorial to them, not by a static description of their leading personalities, but rather by a vivid, dynamic portrayal of their active and vital communal life. I have tried to present not only

the details of their day-to-day existence, with its brighter and darker sides, but also the faith in eternal life that was the central theme and mainstay of these two communities throughout their history, as of all Jewish communities: not only the earthly Pinsk-Karlin, but also its heavenly counterpart.

*

The large-scale migrations eastward of Jews in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries from western Europe brought them to Lithuania. Some of the Jews of Brest-Litovsk continued eastwards until they reached Pinsk, where they obtained permission from the authorities to build a synagogue and dedicate ground for a cemetery (1506), thus laying the foundations for a new Jewish community — that of Pinsk. The part of the city that they chose for their residence and the way in which they settled in it were characteristic: they established themselves en bloc in a "Judengasse" hard by the prince's castle (to ensure his protection), and not far from the riverside market (to facilitate their economic activity). Thus did the Pinsk ghetto come into being.

The growth of the city's Jewish population was gradual, both in absolute terms and relatively to the total number of inhabitants. At the time of its establishment (1506), the Jewish community in Pinsk numbered about 75 souls — men, women, and children. Sixty years later (1566), their numbers had risen to about 300, or 8% of the total population. At the time of the 1648 Khmelnitzki massacres they numbered approximately 1,000, or 25% of the population, and in the year of Pinsk's annexation to Russia (1793) about 5,100. From then onwards their numbers increased rapidly to 19,754 in 1878 (or 86% of the total population) and 21,965 in 1897 (or 74.2% of the total). On the eve of the First World War there were 28,063 Jews in Pinsk, constituting 72.4%

of the city's population. This remained the demographic structure of Pinsk until the tragic end of the Pinsk and Karlin communities. These statistics show that, starting with a small Jewish minority, Pinsk became first a mixed city, and eventually a city with a Jewish majority numbering as much as seventy five percent, or even more, of the total population. Pinsk was the second Russian city, after Berdichev, with such a high percentage of Jews, a situation which had a decisive influence on the mentality of the Pinsk Jew. Since the majority of the non-Jewish population lived in the outskirts, the Jewish character of the city was particularly felt in such matters as the celebration of Sabbaths and Festivals, and the like. Indeed, the sight of the Christians coming out of their churches on their holy days, dressed in their best clothes and walking through the streets of the city, was offensive to the Pinsk Jews, who regarded this as something alien to, and detracting from, the specially Jewish character of the city.

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The numerical growth of the Jews in Pinsk resulted in their spreading out in all directions from the quarter where they had originally settled, viz. the "Judengasse" which ran from the cemetery in Zavalna Street to the great synagogue and the market. They turned first eastwards, to the city's main thoroughfare, Spaski Street, ("die greisse Gass") and to the roads running parallel to it, and then westwards to Lohishin Street and the area between it and Brisk Street. Later on they occupied the whole length of Brisk Street and the lanes running off it; and in the 18th and 19th centuries they pushed out northwards beyond Zavalna Street, and southwards to the bank of the river Pina. The way in which they spread out was typical. Maintaining their cohesion, they penetrated in large numbers into the Christian streets adjoining the area in which they were already living. In these "new" streets the Jews first of all lived side by side with the Christians, till in the course of time, with the natural increase of the Jewish population these streets too came to be inhabited mainly by Jews. The Christians moved out to the suburbs, while the Jews continued to live where they were in a solid, homogeneous bloc. This process took place in all parts of the city, both those subject to the municipal authorities and those under the control of the Pravo-Slavic, Catholic priesthood or of the feudal barons (*peritsim*). According to the situation,

the Jews presented their petitions to either the municipal authorities or to one of the churches, taking full advantage of the rights granted them. Their struggle against the restrictions imposed on them by all these authorities was a successful, though hard, one. In addition to this expansion from the centre (the "Judengasse") to the periphery, there was also a process of Jewish settlement in the opposite direction, from the periphery to the centre. At the end of the 17th century a Jewish community was established in Karlin, to the east of Pinsk. The Jews of Pinsk thereupon began to settle in Karlin, partly at the request of the local inhabitants. The number of Jews in Karlin increased steadily and Karlin itself grew in size until it eventually reached the boundaries of Pinsk. Karlin now became a suburb of Pinsk with both places being inhabited mainly by Jews. Thus was Pinsk "taken over" by the Jews. The independence originally enjoyed by Karlin gave its Jewish inhabitants such a deep-rooted desire for autonomy that in the 18th century two separate Jewish communities arose in the one city of Pinsk — the Pinsk community and the Karlin community, which together accounted for most of the city's population.

*

Having "taken over" their own city, the Jews of Pinsk went on to play an important historical part in the setting up of Jewish communities in the small towns in the district of Polesia (such as Kletsk), and even outside its boundaries (in Volhynia). One of the main economic activities of Pinsk Jewry was the leasing of estates, villages, forests, and lakes, together with their movable effects (including serfs) and immovable property (such as inns, mills, foundries), the latter often including transport facilities and road tolls. Such leases necessitated the administration of the property by trustworthy officials, sub-lessees, and the like. As these latter were nearly all either members of the chief lessee's family or fellow-townsmen of his who took up residence in the places leased, a process began whereby the Jews of Pinsk gradually "colonized" the small towns. Even after great changes had taken place in the social structure of the Jewish population in Pinsk and its surroundings, Pinsk still remained the cultural, economic and political metropolis of the whole of Polesia and the seat of the district government offices. Here the Jews established industrial enterprises for processing the raw-material of the district (saw-mills for the wood from the Polesian

forests, the factories of Lourié and Halpern, and the like) and turned the city into a marketing centre for the agricultural produce of the whole region. But, above all, Pinsk became a centre of *Torah* (religious study) and *haskalah* (secular Jewish learning). To take only one example out of many: it was to Pinsk that Ozer Weizmann, from the nearby small town of Motele, sent his son Chaim and his other children to continue their studies, and then moved there himself for the sake of his own business activities and his children's education. Many other Jewish fathers in the region did the same. So great was the influence exercised by Pinsk over the whole surrounding district that the new doctrine of hasidism, which had come from Karlin, the suburb of Pinsk, evoked a readier response in the 18th and 19th centuries amongst the Jewish population of the small towns and villages than in Pinsk itself. The Jewish community in Pinsk and its surroundings continued to grow and spread, despite the hardships (legal disabilities, expulsions, burning-down of property, wars) to which it was constantly subjected. A decisive factor in this natural increase was the autonomy that the community enjoyed in its internal affairs. This autonomy was already recognized in principle in 1506, when the authorities granted the request made by the first *minyán* of Jews in Pinsk for permission to build a synagogue and to dedicate a plot of land for a cemetery, both in the "Judengasse".

In the first twenty-five years of the Pinsk community's existence the foundation was laid for co-operation with the other Lithuanian Jewish communities, and a joint organization was set up in which the Pinsk community was prominently represented. In 1555 we find a Jew from Pinsk making representations to the secular authorities on behalf of all the Jews of Lithuania. And of the three "chief communities" represented on the supreme body of Lithuanian Jewry — the "Council of the State of Lithuania" — which was set up in 1623, Pinsk was the third, after Brest and Grodno. The Pinsk community suffered severely in the Khmelnitzki massacres of 1648, but quickly recovered. At first, Pinsk was a "chief community" for 26 smaller Jewish settlements, but this number steadily decreased. To protect its rights as a "chief community in the State of Lithuania" Pinsk had to wage a struggle with the Communal Council of Volhynia, and with all the other "leading communities of Lithuania", especially with the neighbouring small communities which had been founded from

Pinsk, and now wished to shake off its authority. The severest threat to Pinsk's leadership came from Karlin, where the Jewish population established its own independent community. Nevertheless, despite these conflicts, which often led to open quarrels between the communities, Pinsk succeeded in preserving its position and influence, down to the abolition of the "Council of the State" (1764). During all this period it represented the Jewish population to the secular authorities, administered the collection of taxes throughout the district, dealt with the release of Jewish captives, maintained its own independent law-court (for both civil and religious matters), its own *Rav*, school teachers, *hazan* and *shamash*, and provided money for the support of its *yeshivah* students and for the establishment of religious and charitable organizations, etc. All these activities were an essential part of the "chief community's" autonomy. The national significance of this communal organization is illustrated by the prohibition promulgated by the heads of the community, as a sign of solidarity with Polish and Ukrainian Jewry in their times of trouble, on the wearing of finery, the playing of musical instruments, and the eating of unnecessarily large meals. Even when, in 1844, the secular authorities legally abolished the institution of the *kehillah*, that of Karlin — and possibly also that of Pinsk — still continued to function, as is attested by the letters of the Pinsk *Av Beth-Din* (President of the Religious Court) and the Karlin *Av Beth-Din* to the Rebbe of Kobrin, stamped with "the seal of the Karlin *kehillah*" and dated 1857. After the abolition of the *kehilloth*, the leaders of all the various Jewish communities became legally the functionaries of the secular power and were used by it for its own purposes (the collection of taxes, the payment of duties, etc.). But Pinsk and Karlin, like the other Lithuanian *kehilloth*, retained their social, juridical, and cultural autonomy. The affairs of the *kehilloth* were administered by the president and members of the religious courts, in co-operation with leading public figures and the officially appointed Rabbi. A very important factor in the preservation and extension of this autonomy in Pinsk were the local rich "philanthropists", who established and maintained educational and charitable institutions out of their own pockets, and were influential with the secular authorities. In contrast to the assimilating tendencies of many of the Jewish dignitaries and wealthy merchants in the Polish communities, the leading Jews in Pinsk and Karlin were

distinguished by their loyalty to Judaism and the Jewish people, and their devoted service fully earned them the title of "the Rothschilds of Pinsk and Karlin" (the Levin, Lourie, Halpern, and Eliasberg families). The factories and commercial enterprises established by them employed only Jewish labour. In this way, despite the lack of official authorization, the Jews of Pinsk and Karlin were able to preserve their autonomy in internal Jewish matters. In the twentieth century, the management of communal affairs passed to the political parties, each of which fostered its own brand of Jewish nationalism. In the last period of Poland's independent existence between the two World Wars, an attempt was made to resuscitate the *kehillah* as a legally recognized institution. However, for mainly internal reasons, this attempt had only limited practical results.

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In the martyrology of our people, Pinsk has its own page of glory. The members of the Jewish community not only suffered from the restrictions imposed on their civil rights by various rulers, but they were also time and again the victims of expulsion and massacres, especially during political upheavals and wars. On account of its geographical position, — wedged first between Pravo-Slavic Russia, Catholic Poland and Lithuania, and in its last years between Bolshevik Russia and nationalist Poland — the city frequently changed hands in times of war, with the Jews of Pinsk, who were neither Russians nor Poles, serving as a scapegoat for both sides. In this situation, the Jews of Pinsk from time to time tried to escape their fate by abandoning their property and fleeing from the town before its conquest by one of the warring armies, only to be pursued and caught. Those that stayed in the town — mostly the poorer classes — were expelled or even put to death by the conqueror, often with the active assistance of the local Gentile population. This long, tragic sequence of persecutions reached its climax of horror in the second half of the 17th century (the Khmelnitzky massacres, the Muscovites, the Cossacks, Kurhan's marauding bands, the Poles) and again in the confusion after the First World War (1918—1920; the Bolsheviks, the armed bands of Bulak-Balakhovich, the Poles, the 1919 pogrom).

As the district capital of Polesia, Pinsk was the place where the Jews who had been expelled by decree of the secular power from the surrounding villages

sought refuge. Together with the other Lithuanian *kehilloth*, Pinsk extended aid to the Jews expelled by the Russian general, Nikolai Nikolaievitch, at the beginning of the First World War. The condition of the Pinsk community at that time is well indicated by the three "orphans' homes" established by the Jews of Pinsk during and after the First World War — two of them for the *kehillah's* own orphans, and the third specially for those of the whole district. In addition to the specifically anti-Jewish persecution, the Jews of Pinsk also suffered from the numerous disasters of war which time and again afflicted the whole population, such as the burning down of the city by the Poles (1648) and by the Muscovites and Cossacks (1655, 1660), its destruction by the Swedes (1706), the expulsion of most of the population by the Germans in the First World War, the burning down of the factories by the Russians before the Germans' entry into the city (1915), and the rest. Nor was peacetime free of its scourges: the houses of Pinsk being built, until modern times, mostly of wood, large parts of the city were frequently devastated by disastrous fires, such as the great conflagration of 1799 (in which the Burial Society register — *pinkas* — was destroyed, and also apparently the communal register), and those in 1901 and 1921.

One cannot help being amazed at the vitality displayed by the Pinsk community in surviving and overcoming all these devastating shocks, and again and again rebuilding a flourishing spiritual and economic life for itself out of the ruins of a previous edifice. In the days of the "Council of the State", Pinsk preserved its autonomy as a "chief community", despite the Khmelnitzki massacres. Similarly, the energy with which the Jews of the town devoted themselves to the study of the Law, to Jewish education, and to the betterment of their economic condition remained undiminished in all the hardships and disasters of the First World War, in the years of bloodshed and revolution that followed, and in the period of harshly anti-Semitic Polish rule (1921-1939). The determined spirit of Pinsk Jewry and its power to remain unaffected by outside economic and political factors — such as the partitions of Poland and the other political upheavals in the region — is attested by the growth of a special branch of hasidism — Karlin hasidism — in its midst in the second half of the 18th century, just at the time of these violent events. The constant growth and development of the Pinsk community, despite all these blows and set-

backs, bears witness to the powerful spiritual vitality with which its members were endowed and which was their mainstay in time of trouble.

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The economic condition of the Pinsk community took its own distinctive forms and followed its own distinctive development.

Whereas the community enjoyed cultural and national independence from the day of its establishment, and its autonomous control of its internal affairs raised it to the status of a "chief community" with the creation of the "Council of the State" (1623), it did not become economically independent of the Gentile population till the 19th century, after Pinsk had passed under Russian rule. The economic development of the Pinsk Community falls into two chronological halves: the Lithuanian-Polish period, marked by the small size of the city's Jewish population and by the wars fought all around the city by hostile powers; and the period of stable Russian rule and the great increase in the Jewish population, from c. 5,100 at the end of the Polish period (1793) to 22,000 in 1886, or 83% of the city's total inhabitants. In the first period, the Jews of Pinsk, as a minority — and at first a small one — were not able to constitute an independent economic unit. Thanks to their commercial and organizational talents some Jews, as individuals or small groups, succeeded in finding places for themselves in the economic and social structure of the town and its surroundings. As described above, their chief economic occupation was leasing in all its various forms: leasing of estates, including the peasants, serfs, inns, highways, road-and bridge-tolls, and the like. Many Jews dealt in loans, mainly to Gentiles; and the borrowers, for example the "boyars" (the wealthy upper classes), used to mortgage their lands as surety for the repayment of the loan to the Jewish moneylenders. There were also Jewish dealers in furs, salt, and forest-products, such as potash, etc. These goods were sent to the Ukraine or Poland. Then, in the market, there were Jewish shop-owners who helped to develop the town's commercial centre, close to the "Judengasse". If Jews acquired land, it was only as an investment, since they took no part in agriculture. Nor were there many Jewish artisans.

As time passed, the economic structure of Pinsk Jewry underwent various changes. As a result of the

frequent wars and the consequent political instability, the large leases disappeared completely, while tax- and duty-leasing and money-lending to Gentiles steadily declined. On the other hand, there was an increase in Jewish business dealings — whether import and export trade in, e.g., timber, potash, crops, hardware, and food commodities, or purchases and sales in the shops opened by Jews in the market-place. The Jews of Pinsk now participated in the fairs inside and outside Pinsk, going as far afield as Breslau in Germany. They gained themselves a prominent place among the city's wholesalers, gradually pushing out the Gentile merchants. This process whereby the Jews gave up leasing and turned more and more to developing the city's commerce gathered momentum. The Jews began to sell drinks, to buy the produce of the local farmers, and to set up a new commercial centre next to the synagogue. A Jewish retail trade now developed, which also began to force the local Gentiles out of business. Some Jews also started to work as artisans. Thus, parallel to the "taking over" of the city by the Jewish population as a result of its numerical growth and spread, the Jews already at this early period succeeded in gaining control of the city's commerce. As the Gentiles were dislodged from their economic positions, they moved to the outskirts and took to manual trades. The Jewish domination of all kinds of business aroused the envy and hatred of the Gentiles, and gave rise to a hostile attitude on the part of the churches, the secular authorities, and the aristocracy. However, this Jewish domination of the commercial life of Pinsk had no sound economic foundation, since in order to carry on their businesses the Jews had to take loans from the Gentiles, for example from the aristocracy. Now the boot was on the other foot: the former lenders were now the borrowers, and the former borrowers became the lenders. At that time, the latter part of the 18th century and the end of the Polish period, there was a general collapse of moral restraints and an outbreak of licence and violent robbery which caused great suffering to the Jews of Pinsk and greatly harmed their economic position. In addition to these blows from outside, they were also afflicted by a great decline in the community's prestige, in consequence of its inability to pay off large debts incurred to various monastic orders and government officers. It was in such unstable and difficult circumstances that the foundation was laid of Pinsk Jewry's economic independence, though the full flowering of that independence had

to wait until the city had passed from Polish to Russian rule.

The development of Pinsk's economy was favoured by the change for the better in the city's geographical position after the abolition of the Russo-Polish border (1795), and by the improvement in its transport facilities at the end of the 18th and in the course of the 19th century, following on the cutting of the Oginsky and Royal Canals, and the laying of the railway lines, westwards to Zhabinka-Brest-Litovsk (1844) and eastwards to Luninets (1887). It was the Jews of Pinsk that set the city's economy — first its commerce, and then its industry — on a firm basis by making the most of three factors: the exploitation of the region's natural resources (especially the forests of Polesia) and of the city's position as an inland port and transport centre (for Poland, the Baltic, the Ukraine, and Polesia); the commercial initiative and organizational talent displayed by the Jews of Pinsk in setting up large-scale enterprises run by the technological methods of Western Europe; and the skill and strength of the Pinsk Jewish worker. In the period preceding the annexation of the city to Russia, the Jews of Pinsk had already (as described above) taken control of the city's wholesale and retail trade. Now they set up large business concerns which developed the city into an inland harbour capable of handling goods coming from distant places: crops, wood, textile products, salt, tobacco, sugar, iron, etc. Pinsk thus became an important transit station on the great commercial arteries running along the inland network of rivers, and a link with the outside world was established. The commercial life of Pinsk in those days was concentrated on the banks of the river, so that it was correctly dubbed "the Jewish Hansa". Of the great merchants of that time, mention should be made of R. Shaul Karliner (Levin), one of the most influential Jews of Pinsk, Karlin and the whole region. His great wealth and influence are evident from his will, which is a document of historical value. He apparently made his money from timber and government contracts. His commercial activities were continued by his four sons, also among the richest Jews of Pinsk. But they were outshone by their sister Hayyah, the ancestress of the Lourié family, who by her talents became one of the wealthiest Jews in Pinsk, if not the wealthiest of them all. In furthering her business interests — apparently the buying and selling of corn and timber — she exploited Pinsk's central position to extend her commercial power south-

wards and westwards. Her great contribution to the development of Pinsk as an inland port was recognized by the Russian government when the Tsar Alexander II awarded Hayyah Lourié and her descendants the title of "Honorary Citizen of the Russian Empire". Naturally, the chief beneficiaries from her commercial enterprises were Pinsk Jews, such great merchants as Hayyah's own sons — Moshe and David Lourié, and Gad-Asher Levin — and the tallow-magnate, Mordekhai Lifschitz. To develop the city's harbour, some Jews acquired steam-boats, which they operated between Pinsk and the towns of the Ukraine in place of the oar-propelled rafts. Meir Levin led the way by purchasing one such steamboat (before 1862) from a Gentile and renaming it "Liov". In 1868, 8 of the 12 private steamboats carrying goods on this waterway were Jewish-owned. That was the time — the sixties of the last century — when these Jewish magnates began setting up factories for the processing of the raw materials which they brought in steamboats from the surrounding district and further south. It was a period when the economy of the Jews of Pinsk was based partly on commerce and partly on industry. As with the actual settlement in the city, so in the commercial and industrial operation of the steamboats, the Gentiles preceded the Jews. In the course of time, most of the above enterprises passed into Jewish hands, like the factory for making candles and soap from tallow which was built by Gentiles in 1850 and came under Jewish control in 1872. However, whereas the settlement and spread of the Jews in the city mostly followed on their purchase of property from the local Gentiles, many Jews (e.g. Moshe Lourié) developed the operation of the steamboats, and industrial activities in general, on their own initiative, ordering ships and machinery from abroad. The laying of the railway lines through Pinsk in the eighties of the 19th century decreased its importance as a transport centre and had a damaging effect on its commerce. As a result, industry began to take the place of commerce, developing as the Jewish population increased. Pinsk now became a mainly industrial city, with various branches of commerce playing a secondary role. The feature common to the industry and the commerce was that both were almost entirely in Jewish hands. So much so, that the anti-Semitic Russian economist, J. Jansson, in his study of the economy of Pinsk (1869), was obliged to call it "this Jewish city".

The following is a list of the factories built by the

Jews of Pinsk during the 19th century and up to the First World War : (1) Two factories for the manufacture of candles and soap. These were originally put up by Gentiles, but when the first owners proved incapable of running them properly and lost their money, they were bought out by Jews (Eliyahu Eliasberg, the son-in-law of Hayyah Lourié's son Moshe, Shemuel Rabinovitz, the son-in-law of Gad-Asher Levin, and Scheinfinkel) who proceeded to operate one of them, which became a household word throughout Russia. At first, most of the workers employed in this factory were Gentiles but in the course of time their place was taken by Jewish workers, 120 in number. The factory was destroyed by fire in 1900 and never rebuilt. (2) In 1865 a flour-mill was built (by Moshe Lourié), and in 1872 it was operated by a steam-powered engine imported from Germany. (3) At about the same time, a second steam-engine was imported to power an oil-press (also owned by Moshe Lourié). (4) In 1879-80, the same Moshe Lourié built a large factory for wooden nails for shoes, the first of its kind in Russia. This factory, which was also powered by steam-engines imported from abroad, employed 200 workers, and its products were sold all over Russia. (5) This was followed by the erection of a factory for the production of wooden containers for cart-wheel grease, with a special bark-stripping machine imported from Germany by the owner (Moshe Lourié's son, Lippa). (6) In 1898-99 a large factory was erected for the production of plywood boards for building and furniture. In order to be able to make full use for this purpose of the alder growing in Polesia, the owner of the factory (Lippa Lourié) introduced two improvements in the technical process of manufacturing the boards: he put into operation a hydraulic press to squeeze out the oil with which the sheets of plywood were stuck together; and he was the first to make use of wet glue in place of dry glue. The new industry which thus came into being in Pinsk provided a livelihood for thousands of Jews. The products of this factory found a market not only in Russia, but also in Austria and England. In the Haifa "Technion" there is preserved a castiron plate from one of the presses which were used for the first time in this factory. (7) In about 1890, a large saw-mill was built, also operated by steam-power (owned by the brothers L. and A. Lourié). (8) A special factory for the production of parquet flooring. All these factories for the processing of timber together employed 800 people, the great majority of

them Jews. (9) In 1892, a Jew from Courland opened a match-factory. After its destruction by fire in 1897, it was rebuilt by Yosef Halpern and employed 400—500 workers, 80-90% of them, and even more, Jews. The matches produced by this factory, one of the largest of its kind in Russia, were sold as far away as Southern Russia, the Caucasus, the towns on the shore of the Caspian Sea, etc. This was the next largest factory in Pinsk after those of the Lourié family, and provided a livelihood for a considerable part of the Jewish population. (10) Of the two cork-factories in Pinsk, one was owned by Gentiles, and the other, larger one, by Jews. 11) The well-known Zionist, Grigory Lourié, a contemporary of Herzl's and one of the delegates to the First Zionist Congress, built a factory for making chalk, and also a small chemical works in which the first President of Israel, Chaim Weizmann, worked in his student days. Grigory Lourié was the first, and in his day the only, employer in Pinsk, who introduced an eight-hour working day in his industrial enterprises. (12) Also in Jewish ownership were plants for tobacco, beer, bricks, leather, envelopes, glassware, sweets, "halva", straw, and many saw-mills, etc.

There were two Gentile-owned ship-repair yards on the banks of the river Pina. Close to the railway station there was a large government railway coach-repairing works employing 1,500 Gentiles, whose homes were on the outskirts of the city and whose daily needs were a source of Jewish livelihood (tailoring, shoe-repairing and the like). A government-owned brandy distillery was built by the government near the railway station. This is evidence of the process whereby the Gentile minority segregated itself from the Jewish majority in the city, first topographically, with the Gentile population being pushed out to the periphery and the city being "taken over" by the Jews, and then economically and socially. On a rough estimate, the number of Jewish workers — men and women — in Pinsk at the end of the 19th century was at least 2,500 — 3,000, many of them heads of families. The creation of many new places of work brought about a significant change in the social structure of Pinsk Jewry. An industrial and clerical proletariat now came into being, with 50% of the city's Jewish population making its living by manual labour. The number of Jewish artisans, which was about 95 in 1865, greatly increased in the eighties of the century, when the government set up the large railway-coach repair works. There was also a significant rise

in the number of building-workers, furniture-makers, tailors, shoe-repairers, fur-makers, etc. Some of the enterprises included in the above list of factories were presumably no more than modest family workshops in which the members of the family earned a hard-won livelihood, either by themselves or with the assistance of one or two workers. There may also have been some small concerns which have not been included in our list. It should also be mentioned that Jews were the first bankers in Pinsk.

Since the Jews of Pinsk came to have virtually no economic relations with the Gentile population, they were obliged to provide all the labour force required for the satisfaction of their needs out of their own midst; carters, porters, fishermen, artisans of all kinds, factory workers, clerks, and managers. Many trades were completely taken over by Jews (builders, painters, plasterers, carpenters, glaziers, tinsmiths, watch-makers, goldsmiths, and many others). Only in the academic professions (doctors, engineers, lawyers, midwives, pharmacutists) were there as many Gentiles as Jews. With justice did "Karliner" (the pen-name of Lippa-Leopold Lourié) entitle his article about Pinsk, which was published in Dr. Herzl's "Die Welt" (1898, No. 11, p. 3 ff.), "Eine juedische Arbeiterstadt". Important details about the economic condition of Pinsk, especially at the end of the 19th century, are to be found in the article "On Pinsk, Karlin, and their Inhabitants" (in Hebrew) by the first historian of the Pinsk community, Shaul Mendl Halevi Rabinowitsch, which was published in the literary journal *Talpiyoth* (Berdichev 1895, *Mador Kehilloth Yaakov*, pp. 7-17). The harbour town of Pinsk now became the city of Jewish labour.

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But economic success and economic independence are far from being the whole story of the Pinsk Jewish community in the 19th century. The spiritual character of the community in this period was moulded by the traditional values of Judaism, and in consequence the Jewish population's whole way of life and the whole atmosphere of its existence were given a characteristically Jewish stamp. On the eves of Sabbaths and Festivals the workers in the factories would lay down their tools an hour before the time for lighting the ceremonial candles. Two long blasts on the siren from the Lourié factory would herald in the Sabbath — the first announcing the time for closing the shops, and the second, about half an hour

later, the time for lighting the candles. Not only the Jews of Pinsk, but also those of the neighbouring smaller communities beyond the lakes and rivers, took these siren-blasts as their sign for bringing in the Sabbath. The factories of Pinsk were closed on Sabbaths and Festivals, and some of them stopped work on *Tisha b'Av* too. In the large factories (like that of the Lourié's, and the Halpern match factory) provision was made for a synagogue in which, especially on the "Pentitential Days", the manager and the ordinary workers prayed together. The workers who came to the first shift before sunrise would down tools to pray, a special break being allowed them for this purpose. An Ark and Scroll of the Law were placed in the hall set aside as a synagogue. At Pass-over, the workers in the plywood factory would be given wooden boards to cover their tables and thereby make them ritually clean for the Festival of Unleavened Bread. In normal years, the same workers also received *matsoth* free of charge. In the synagogue that stood in the industrial zone in the west of the city, the overwhelming majority of the congregation consisted of workers from the factories. Here it was that many of them, after their day's toil at the workbench, spent their leisure together on Sabbaths and Festivals, and also their free evenings during the week. Near to this synagogue was the home of a *dayyan*, Rav Hindin, to whose halakhic authority the workers appealed in matters of religious observance and for the settlement of any money disputes between them. Various artisans' and workers' organizations set up special synagogues (*minyanim*) for their own members, and there were thus synagogues of, e.g., the tailors, the butchers, the porters, the fur-makers, the fish-merchants, the hat-makers, etc.

From the end of the 19th century until the First World War, and also between the two World Wars, there was intense socialist activity in the factories, carried on by the *Haskalah* movement and the various political parties, as described in detail in the volume "Toisent Johr Pinsk" (ed. B. Hoffman, New York 1941). During the years of the "reaction" in Russia, many of the workers were forced to leave Pinsk and emigrate to the U.S.A. The factory managers and clerks were among the leaders of the *Hovevei Zion* and Zionist movements in Pinsk, e.g., Meir Lieberman and Dr. Hazanovich from the candle factory, Aharon Rubinstein, Shaul Rabinowitsch, Mordekhai Eisenberg, Aharon Stillerman, Yaakov Eliasberg from the Lourié factory, Moshe Y. Rom, Avraham Kreinyuk, Aharon

Rubin from the match factory, and others, all of whom played an important and honourable part in the Zionist effort during and after Herzl's time.

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The position of *Rav* in Pinsk and Karlin was one of the most important rabbinical offices in Lithuania and Poland. Amongst the great *Rabbanim* and talmudical scholars of these communities, who until the end of the 19th century were their spiritual leaders, we find representatives of all the different trends in Judaism. There were *darshanim* (homiletic exegetes), such as R. Yehudah-Leib Pukhovitser (b. Pinsk c. 1630, d. after 1700); the exegete and preacher, popularly known as "the moralist from Pinsk", who wrote the works *Kenek Hokhmah*, *Derekh Hokhmah*, *Divrei Hakhamim*, *Kevod Hakhamim*, and whose books are today studied in the Hebrew University; R. Eliezer, the son of R. Meir Halevi, a Pinsk *Rav* in the second half of the 18th century, the author of *Siah ha-Sadeh* and *Reiah ha-Sadeh*, allegorical and moralistic commentaries on the Pentateuch; R. Eliezer, the son of R. Reuven Cahana, who lived in Karlin in the first half of the 18th century and who wrote *Siah Sejunim*, an allegorical commentary on the Five Scrolls which was translated into Yiddish, and also *Taamei Torah*. Among the *posekim* (halakhic authorities), who wrote new interpretations in matters of *halakhah* and responsa to religious questions, were the following: R. Yaakov, the son of R. Shimon, who lived in the first half of the 18th century and was the author of *Kehillath Yaakov* (interpretations to the Talmud and Responsa); Dov-Baer, the son of R. Nathan-Note, who lived in Pinsk also in the first half of the 18th century and was the author of *Nitei Shaashuim*, a halakhic commentary on various talmudic tractates; R. Raphael Hamburger, who wrote the book *Torath Yekuthiel* while serving as the Pinsk *Av Beth-Din* from 1763 to 1772; R. Shelomo Katz of Pinsk, author of *Halakhah Pesukah* (published in 1787); R. Yaakov, the son of R. Aharon (Barukhin), the *Av Beth-Din* of Karlin (d. there in 1844), the author of *Mishkenoth Yaakov* and *Kehillath Yaakov*; his brother and successor in Karlin, R. Yitshak, the son of R. Aharon (Minkovski), d. in Karlin 1851, and author of *Keren Orah*, a volume of new halakhic rulings on various talmudic tractates which went through many editions (the last in Jerusalem, 1959) and is especially well known among *yeshivah* students; R. David Friedmann, the *Av Beth-Din* of Karlin from

1868 to 1915, author of *Piskei Halakhoth* and *Sheeloth David*, works based on the sayings of the first halakhic scholars; R. Aharon Valkin, the *Av Beth-Din* of Pinsk-Karlin from after the end of the First World War until 1942, wrote *Beth Aharon*, *Zekan Aharon*, *Metsah Aharon* (allegorical homilies), and *Hoshen Aharon*, and published his own commentary to the *Sefer Vereim* by R. Eliezer, the son of R. Shemuel of Metz, one of the authors of the *tosafoth* (all R. Aharon Valkin's books were originally printed in Pinsk). R. Elazar-Moshe Halevi Hurwitz, the Pinsk *Av Beth-Din* from 1859-1890, left in manuscript, at his death, "marginal comments" to the Talmud which were included in the Vilna edition of that work and were also published, together with comments on the Talmud, Midrash and other Jewish source-texts, under the title *Ohel Moshe*.

Three Pinsk *Rabbanim* applied themselves to *parshanut* (exegetical commentary). The first, R. Aharon of Kretingen, *Av Beth-Din* of Pinsk (d. there in the early forties of the 19th cent.), wrote *Tosefot Aharon*, a volume of exegetical commentary on cruxes in the *tosafoth*, with comparisons of the Babylonian and Jerusalem versions in the Talmud and allegorical interpretations in the spirit of the *Kabbalah*. The other two wrote commentaries on the additions to the Talmud. R. Shemuel-Avigdor Tosefaah, the Karlin *Av Beth-Din* from 1855 or 1856 till his death in 1866, compiled a commentary to the *Tosefta*, for which he was known, among rabbinical scholars, as *Tanna Tosefaah*. His commentary on the talmudic "orders" *Nashim*, *Zeraim*, *Moed*, and *Kodashim* was included in the Vilna edition of the Talmud, and in the Vilna edition of *Hilekhot R. Alfis*. R. Tsevi-Hirsch Hachohen Valk, the Pinsk *Av Beth-Din* from 1895 till his death in 1906, wrote a commentary to *Sifrei* entitled *Kether Kehunah*. R. Yitshak, the son of R. Aharon, in his above mentioned book *Keren Orah*, also offers exegetical comments on various talmudic tractates, from the tone of which it is clear that he took account of contemporary social conditions.

R. Barukh Epstein (b. 1860, d. Pinsk 1942) was a talmudic encyclopedist and chronicler. In his well-known work, *Torah Temimah*, he assigns to every verse in the Written Law appropriate rabbinical comments from the Oral Law. To substantiate the connection between the two sources, the author added his own explanatory remarks, written in the logical and analytical style characteristic of a Lithuanian Jew from the Volozhin *yeshivah*. R. Barukh Epstein's

second great work, *Mekor Barukh*, a volume of varied autobiographical reminiscences in four parts (2039 pages), is a particularly rich mine of historical information about Lithuanian Jewry during the last three generations before the Second World War. His other books, some of them written in the spirit of *Torah Temimah*, are: *Tosefeth Berakhah* (printed in Pinsk), *Gishmei Berakhah*, *Barukh she-Amar* (3 vols., on the prayers, the Passover *haggadah*, and *Pirkei Avoth*, printed in Pinsk shortly before the Communist occupation of the city in 1939), *Mekor Barukh* (a commentary on the Jerusalem Talmud), *Nahal Dimah* (a eulogy of his deceased father-in-law, R. Elazar-Moshe Hurwitz, the Pinsk *Av Beth-Din*), *Safah la-Neemanim*, *Mehkerei Safah* (printed in Pinsk), and supplements to the work of his fellow-townsmen, A. B. Goldin, *Othiyoth Mahkimoth*.

Of biographical and bibliographical interest is the volume *Oholei Shem* by R. Shemuel-Noah Gottlieb (printed in Pinsk) which contains many important details about the lives of the *Rabbanim* who were the author's contemporaries (1912).

A very important episode in the history of our two communities — the rise of the hasidic movement — is commemorated by two books of homiletic exegesis in the hasidic spirit: *Kedushath Levi* by R. Levi-Yitshak of Berdichev, the Pinsk *Av Beth-Din* from 1875 or 1876 to 1885; and *Beth Aharon* by all the *Tsaddikim* of the Karlin hasidic dynasty.

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In Pinsk and Karlin, as in other Jewish communities, every generation had its own scholars and sages. The most gifted of them moulded the spiritual character of the two communities, preserved and fostered their cultural values, and often brought about far-reaching changes in their spiritual lives.

Culturally, the period from the establishment of the Pinsk and Karlin communities to the early sixties of the 18th century was marked by the same unvaried pattern: the *Av Beth-Din* and the *Rav*, the *melammed* and the *yeshivah*, the *Shulhan Arukh*, the Talmud and its commentaries, and in some measure the kabbalistic lore — all these determined the character of the lives lived by the Jews of Pinsk and Karlin, as of the Jews in all the other communities of Eastern Europe throughout this long period.

In the early sixties of the 18th century, there came into being in Karlin a hasidic centre (R. Aharon the Great and his disciples) which became famous in the

history not only of the hasidic movement but also of the whole Jewish people; so much so, that "Karliner" was for a whole century a synonym for "hasid". The rise of Karlin hasidism was one of the reasons for the bans promulgated against hasidism in Lithuania, and split both the Pinsk and Karlin communities into the two bitterly opposed factions of the hasidic minority and the *mithnagged* majority. So strong was the feeling generated by the bans and the communal schism that the *Tsaddik* R. Levi-Yitshak was forced to give up his rabbinical office in Pinsk and move to Berdichev (1785), the *Tsaddik* R. Shelomo of Karlin had to leave Karlin and move to Ludmir in Volhynia (before 1784), the Pinsk *Av Beth-Din*, R. Avigdor, was forcibly deposed from his rabbinical office by the Karlin hasidim (1793), the *Tsaddik* R. Asher the First, on his return from Volhynia to his birthplace was too afraid of the *mithnaggedim* to dare take up residence in Karlin and settled in the nearby small town of Stolin, and the *Tsaddik* R. Aharon the Second was obliged, on the insistence of an influential *mithnagged* family in Pinsk (the Lourié family), to transfer his "court" from Karlin back to Stolin (before 1864), one hundred years after the setting up of the first hasidic *minyán* in Karlin. These events testify to the bitterness of the factional spirit prevailing in Pinsk and Karlin at this time, though it grew gradually weaker with the passage of the years. Besides the Karlin hasidim, there were also, from the beginning of the 19th century, in these two communities followers of the Rebbes of Libeshei and David-Horodok (both close to Pinsk) and of Bereznah in Volhynia (where, however, there were altogether only a few hasidim). All in all, the hasidim in Pinsk and Karlin had six prayer-houses (*shulkhen*) out of the forty two synagogues in the city, including the Great Synagogue. After the tension between the two opposing factions had died down, the *mithnaggedim* and hasidim lived peacefully side by side, each group according to the tenets of its own doctrine.

An important place in the lives of both *mithnaggedim* and hasidim alike was occupied by the movement for the "resettlement of the Land of Israel". As a result, two parallel *kolelim* (groups of settlers) were established by them in Palestine — the "Pinsk *kolel*", founded by the *mithnaggedim*, and the "Karlin *kolel*", founded by the Karlin hasidim. Many of the leaders of the *kolelim* in Palestine were Jews from Pinsk, while the Karlin *kolel* acquired lands and prayer-houses in Tiberias, Safed, and Jerusalem.

In about the middle of the 19th century the first signs of the *haskalah* movement began to appear in Pinsk and Karlin. A group of *maskilim* was established like the similar groups which came into being at this time in Vilna. These *maskilim* stirred up the stagnant waters of Jewish thought and Jewish communal life by their historical researches and belletristic writings. But whereas the Vilna *maskilim* confined their activities to their own city, many of the Pinsk *maskilim* spread their doctrines throughout East European Jewry. Almost all the Pinsk *maskilim* were pupils of the talmudic *yeshivoth*, whose secular knowledge was self-taught and intuitive. One of the first of them was Moshe-Aharon Shatskes who, in his well-known book *Ha-Mafteah*, sought to give an unorthodox, logical, allegorical and critical interpretation of the rabbinical legends. The work caused a great furore, with the orthodox condemning it to the flames (as in the town of Grodno), and the younger generation making Shatskes their intellectual hero. His Yiddish book, "Der Yiddisher far Pesach", contained a satirical criticism of what he thought to be the overdone precautions taken to ensure a ritually pure Passover. Another of the Pinsk *maskilim* of the time, Avraham-Dov Dovzevich, also dealt with the interpretation of the talmudic legends in his book *Ha-Metsaref*. The same author takes up the cudgels in defence of the well-known scholar of the *haskalah* generation, A. Z. Zweifel, against the criticisms of Shatskes. A third member of this group of Pinsk *maskilim* was the Pinsk-born writer and journalist, Tsevi Hachohen Shereshevski, who as a boy had been close to the Pinsk *Av Beth-Din* R. Elazar-Moshe Hurwitz and had gained his knowledge of the Law from private conversations with him. Shereshevski wrote a satirical poem, *Boser Avoth*, on the education of the younger generation, and was a member of the editorial board of the journals *Ha-Melits* and *Ha-Emeth*. Two other members of the Pinsk group were Nahum-Meir Shaikevich (Shomer) and Avraham-Hayyim Rosenberg, the sons-in-law of Michal Berchinski, himself a *maskil* and a member of the city council. On coming to live in Pinsk, Shaikevich joined the *maskilim* of the city and was one of the first writers of fiction in Hebrew and Yiddish. His stories and plays — numbering altogether nearly three hundred — were meant primarily for the plain man, and were historically a direct outcome of the *haskalah* movement. Avraham-Hayyim Rosenberg was educated by his father, R. Uzziel Yaffe, a Pinsk *dayyan* (religious judge). His

varied career was typical of many young men of the *haskalah* generation. After studying in the rabbinical seminary in Zhitomir, he became an officially appointed Rabbi in his hometown of Pinsk (1872-1881), where he founded a Jewish boys' school in which the language of instruction was Russian, but the syllabus made ample provision for Hebrew studies in the spirit of traditional Judaism. He wrote a text-book of Jewish history in Russian, contributed articles to *Ha-Melits*, *Ha-Carmel*, *Voshod* and *Rasvet*, subsequently joined the *Hibbath Tsion* movement, and after emigrating to the U.S.A. wrote there for the Hebrew and Yiddish press. His magnum opus was the *Otsar ha-Shemoth* (5 vols.), an attempt at a biblical encyclopedia.

All these were the leading representatives of the spirit of the *haskalah*, which penetrated to Pinsk and began to influence the younger generation of the time.

The later *Hibbath Tsion* movement played a large part in the history of Pinsk. Recalling his youth in Pinsk of those days, Chaim Weizmann writes: "Pinsk became one of the centres of *Hibbath Tsion*. Rabbi David Friedman [the Karlin *Av Beth-Din*] was a member of the praesidium at the Katovitz conference [of *Hovevei Tsion*, 1884], and was therefore named the leader of the movement in Pinsk". The Pinsk *Av Beth-Din* R. Elazar-Moshe Hurwitz also wrote approvingly of the movement. The well-known preacher of the day, Tsevi-Hirsch Maslianski, was the driving spirit of the movement in Pinsk, where the committee was headed by some of the most respected communal leaders: Tsevi Hiller, M. M. Strick, Yitshak-Asher Naidich, S. Friedman, Aharon Rubinstein, and others. The number of members reached 250, and even as many as 400, only to fall to about 70 in the periods of crisis through which the movement passed. Many were the Pinsk Jews whom the movement inspired to immigrate to Palestine: Yaakov Shertok (the father of Moshe Sharett), who immigrated a short time before the *Bilu* (1881), Rav Zerah Epstein (1883), Yosef Vinograd (1883), Yitshak Vinograd (1886), Yaakov-Tsevi Zisselman (1886), Nimtsovitz (1886), Efraim Graver, and others. Between 1882 and 1891 about two hundred souls emigrated from Pinsk to Palestine, where the *Hovevei Tsion* association and various of its individual members bought land. A special association (*Aqudath ha-Elef*) was founded to raise funds, and emissaries were sent to Palestine to purchase land. When the "Odessa Committee" was formed, Moshe-Hayyim Eliasberg was its representa-

tive in Pinsk; and when the *Benei Moshe* order was established, a branch of it bearing the name *Lishkath Zerubbavel* was organized in Pinsk, headed by the well-known Zionist Yehudah-Leib Berger. The two young *Hovevei Tsion* and *maskilim*, Shaul Rabinowitsch and Yeshayahu Grossberg were the correspondents of *Ha-Melits* in Pinsk and published reports on all the activities of the *Hibbath Tsion* movement in their city.

The Pinsk members of *Hibbath Tsion* were the first to preach the revival of Hebrew as a spoken language and to press for the modernization of the *heder* (religious school). In 1890, only one year after the establishment of the *Safah Berurah* society (for the revival of spoken Hebrew), first in Jerusalem and then in Odessa, some of the young Jews of Pinsk set up a society with the same name and purpose in their city (S. M. Rabinowitsch, Y. H. Grossberg, M. Frankel, Y. Y. Volovelski, Y. L. Vintz, A. Rubinstein, A. Blumenkrantz, Y. Gottlieb, Y. Shulman, P. Bregman, E. D. Lifschitz, S. N. Gittelman, and others, including disciples of the well-known Pinsk talmudist and *maskil*, R. Tsevi Zilberman, "the *melammed* from Slutsk"). From the regulations of this society, and from the correspondence between its members and those of the Odessa society, we can gain some idea of the great difficulties encountered by them in their efforts to realize their aim. In 1895 members of *Safah Berurah* were prominent among the founders of the "modern *heder*", one of the first of its kind in any Jewish community. Amongst those that took an active part in this enterprise were Y. L. Berger and Chaim Weizmann, and the teachers S. Dubovski, S. N. Gittelman, A. A. Feinstein, and others. The *Safah Berurah* society and the "modern *heder*" in Pinsk played an important part in the revival of Hebrew as a spoken language and in the reform of Jewish education. Many of the society's members were contributors to the Hebrew press, writers of literary works, or authors of learned articles on the history of Pinsk. E. D. Lifschitz was the author of the poem "*Numah Perah Beni Mahamadi*" which became a popular lullaby.

From all that has been written above, it is clear that Herzl's political Zionism found a very ready response among the Jews of Pinsk. Chaim Weizmann's words about this period in his autobiography may serve as personal evidence: "It was here in Pinsk that I grew from boyhood into early manhood, here that I had my social and intellectual contacts, and here

that I was inducted into the Zionist movement. Pinsk, then, set the double pattern of my life; it gave me my first bent towards science and it provided me with my first experiences in Zionism". The propagators of the Zionist idea in Pinsk in those days straddled two Jewish worlds, the old and the new. Products of the talmudic education, with a wide knowledge of the classical texts of Judaism, they were at the same time well versed in the modern "Juedische Wissenschaft" and in secular learning. This combination actually started in the days of *Hibbath Tsion*, but without the degree of national consciousness subsequently added to it by the Zionist movement. Interesting evidence of the social and cultural condition of Pinsk Zionism in those days can be found in the "Pinsker Stot-Luah", an annual published (1903-04) by the *Agudath Tsion* and devoted to contemporary problems, the Zionist movement, and local history. The Pinsk Zionist Organization was represented at the various Zionist Congresses, its three delegates to the First Congress being Berger, and Grigory and Shaul Lourié. The constitutive assembly of the Colonial Bank in Cologne (1898) was attended by Grigory Lourié and Moshe-Hayyim Eliasberg. Grigory Lourié was one of the Bank's first directors, and Pinsk was the centre of the sales-propaganda for the Bank's shares in Russia. Amongst the active members of the Pinsk Zionist Organization mention should also be made of M. Lieberman, Dr. L. Hazanovitz, M. Y. Rom, S. M. Rabinowitsch, Y. Bregman (who attended the Helsingfors Convention), the Weizmann family, Y. A. Minkovitz, P. Mandelbaum, Mordekhai Eisenberg, Y. Volovelski (Karni), A. A. Feinstein, and others. Shimshon Rosenbaum, a native of Pinsk, used to travel from Minsk, where he lived, to his home-town to carry on Zionist propaganda there. In the course of time, other Zionist groups were formed in Pinsk — the Mizrahi (headed by Rav Glicksberg, P. Eisenberg, and others), *Poalei Tsion*, whose members subsequently joined the S. S. (Socialist-Territorialist) Party, and the *Ha-Tehiyah* association (founded and led by Zelig Tir). Since the Zionist movement was banned in Russia, many of its members were under police surveillance and were forbidden to leave Pinsk. The more active among them were actually in danger of being deported to Siberia, a fate from which they were saved by the intervention of Dr. Tchlenow with the Russian authorities.

Side by side with the Zionist movement, which drew

its strength mainly from the Jewish middle-class, there also came into being in Pinsk two anti-Zionist socialist parties — the “Bund” and the S.S. — whose members were mainly workers. The aim of these parties was, in their own words, “to add our spark to the flame of the revolution in Russia . . . and to liquidate the capitalist world”. To this end, they waged a revolutionary economic and political struggle, under the slogans of a shorter working day, higher wages, and better social benefits. They strove, in writing and by word of mouth, to educate the workers to a complete change of mental attitude — to convince them that they could dictate conditions to the employers. They were opposed to the traditional Jewish way of life and attacked the patriarchal rule of the *gevirim* (the rich members of the Community), who were at this time moving out of Pinsk. While the Zionist struggle in Pinsk was carried on surreptitiously, behind closed doors (the sale of *shekels* and of Colonial Bank shares) and through school education and propaganda sheets, the socialists fought their battle openly in the streets of the city, in the woods, and in the factories. They even formed their own pistol-carrying armed bands and did not recoil from acts of violence, such as throwing acid in policemen’s faces or even murdering some of them, and robbing government institutions to finance their activities (the purchase of weapons, and the like). Since Pinsk had a large proletariat, its leaders (most of whom came from outside) were able to conduct a large-scale and bitter revolutionary struggle. The history of these socialist parties, especially of the “Bund”, is a long series of public meetings, strikes, demonstrations, clashes with the police and, as already stated, murders (like that of the policeman Bundarzig). The authorities were obliged to bring Cossacks to Pinsk to crush these terrorist activities. The socialists’ struggle now took on all the fervour of a holy war. They fought with selfless heroism, risking, and often sacrificing, their lives. Hershel Stern was murdered by a policeman, who was himself subsequently murdered by members of the “Bund”. Dolinko was killed when a stick of dynamite exploded in his hand; and Moshe Kolodny was blown to pieces by a bomb that he was preparing for use, and his remains were buried by his comrades to the accompaniment of revolutionary songs and pistol-volleys. At the funeral of another Bundist, who had died a natural death, the dead man’s comrades, standing round the open grave, shouted: “Long live political

freedom! Down with the monarchy!”. These are some of the many examples of the courage displayed by the Pinsk socialists in those days. Many of them were condemned to long terms of imprisonment with forced labour, were deported to distant parts of Russia, or were placed under police surveillance, were beaten, and the like. Outstanding among the leaders of this struggle were Shlomke Zeleznikov, Moshe Adler, the shop-assistant Notke, Volodka (who was shot in the leg), and others. By their heroism, the young Pinsk workers of those days wrote a glorious page in the history of Jewish socialism, even though they were ultimately defeated in their struggle. At the height of the oppressive anti-Jewish measures and persecutions (1905), many of them emigrated to the U.S.A. These emigrants still remained loyal to their comrades in Pinsk, providing them with financial support year after year, especially during the hard times through which Pinsk passed after the First World War.

The ideological differences between the various socialist movements often led to quarrels between them, and even to acts of violence. Thus, for example, when the Jews of Pinsk were threatened with a pogrom, no fewer than three defence organizations sprang up in the city: that of the *Benei Tsion*, that of the “Bund”, and that of the S. S. Party. The hostile relations between these rival parties are a sorry chapter in the history of the socialist movement in Pinsk.

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In the First World War, the Jews of Pinsk shared the bitter fate of all the Jewish communities in places conquered by the Germans. Pinsk was particularly unfortunate because of its proximity to the battle-front, and suffered both from war-damage and from food-shortage. Nevertheless, even in these hard conditions, the Jews of Pinsk continued to maintain their communal institutions and to provide for the education of their youth.

In the violent years of political anarchy (1918-1920), when the Jews of Pinsk were at the mercy of their enemies to the east and west (the Polish pogrom of 1919, the excesses committed by the Balakhovich gangs), an outstanding example of utterly selfless and devoted public-service was set by one of the last survivors of the *Hibbath Tsion* period, a man who had gained many adherents for Zionism and the national revival in his city — Avraham-Asher Feinstein. Throughout this desperate period, he did not spare

himself in his efforts to protect the lives, honour and property of his fellow-Jews, and his record of the time and of his endeavours is preserved in his historical volume, *Megillath Puranuyoth* (Tel Aviv 1929).

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Pinsk's period of being under Polish rule (1920-1939) was marked by political oppression and by economic discrimination and struggle, side by side with flourishing cultural growth and activity. The various movements that had arisen amongst the Jews of Pinsk at the end of the previous century (Zionism in its various forms, the modern *heder*, the "Bund" and the other socialist parties, the Yiddish school, the trade unions) now consolidated their ideologies and laid down the lines of the policies to be followed by them. In external matters, they waged a united struggle against the anti-Semitic Polish regime and in defence of their own political and economic rights. But internally they were torn apart by bitter conflicts, particularly on cultural and educational issues. These conflicts sometimes assumed extreme forms, as in the "Bund's" opposition to the election of a communal *Rav*, the language dispute (Hebrew versus Yiddish), and the like. The schools established by these movements were a faithful reflection of the spiritual condition of Pinsk Jewry at this time. The orthodox Jews, as the conservative element, ensured the maintenance of the two *Talmud Torah* institutions — the one in Pinsk, with 350 pupils, and the other in its own building in Karlin. Unlike their counterparts in Poland, these *Talmud Torah* schools included secular subjects in their syllabus, and amongst the members of their staffs were teachers who had received a general education and formal pedagogic training. The main patrons of these schools were the *Rabbanim* Ravinski and Rosenzweig, the Rebbe of Karlin R. Elimelekh Perlov, and the older members of the community Dov Levin, Alter Kolodny, Aharon Shub, Shemuel Tchernihov, Yeshayahu Gevirtsman, David Bonyuk, Moshe Bregman, and others. Also established in Pinsk at this time was the *Beth Yosef yeshivah*, which was transferred there from Russia. In its religious teaching and rules of conduct this *yeshivah* belonged to the *Musar* movement which had been till then unknown in Pinsk. It was under the direction of the Rabbis Shemuel Weintraub, Yosef Glick from Kazan, Yitshak Wolfshen from Shershov, and Yitshak (Itchele) Berlin from Karlin. It had three hundred pupils, who studied in very difficult

conditions. Another educational institution established in Pinsk at this same time was a branch of the *Tifereth Bahurim* movement for religious evening classes. The presence of the Rebbe R. Elimelekh, the son of the *Yenuka* of Stolin, in Karlin, and of the Rebbe R. Yitshak-Aharon of Libeshei in Pinsk, brought about a hasidic revival in the city, albeit limited to their own narrow circle.

The Zionist movement developed a network of educational institutions for the propagation of Zionism and Jewish national consciousness. The *Midrashah Tarbuth* primary school in Pinsk, and later in Karlin, was a continuation of the "modern *heder*" and prepared its pupils for the *Tarbuth* high school. The girls' school founded at the beginning of the present century by the General Zionists, and called first the *Leah Feigeles Shule* and subsequently *Tel Hai*, was later taken over by members of the *Tseirei Tsion* movement. It educated its pupils in the spirit of the Zionist Labour Parties as did the "Y. H. Brenner" primary school. The technical school was already under Zionist direction in the days before the First World War and its principal, Yaakov Ehrlich, emigrated with his family to Palestine before the War. After the War, the school was reopened under the joint direction of the General Zionists, *Tseirei Tsion*, and leading industrialists and businessmen. The pride of the Pinsk Jewish educational system was an institution which gained itself a fine reputation throughout Poland — the *Tarbuth* high school founded by its energetic and devoted first principal, Avraham Mazor, whose work was faithfully carried on and developed by his successor David Alper (neither of them was a native of Pinsk). The school's teachers gave their hundreds of pupils a general education which equipped them to continue their studies at university level and imbued them with the spirit of Zionism and Jewish nationalism. A large number of these pupils realized their parents' ambition and put their teachers' instruction into practice by emigrating to Palestine and playing their part in the rebuilding of the Jewish homeland. The governing bodies of these Zionist educational institutions were composed of middle-class members of the Zionist organization, such as A. A. Feinstein, S. N. Gittelman, M. Basevich, Y. Bregman, A. H. Neiman, Y. Shkolnik, A. Papish, M. Y. and Z. Segalevitz, M. Eisenberg, A. Stillerman, F. Ginsburg, A. Bodankin, Y. Pekatz, Y. Eliasberg, Dr. E. Bregman (in his capacity as Deputy Mayor), A. Weiner (Yisraeli), H. Pinski, B. Katzman, J. Briski, En-

gineer Reich, P. Borushok, and many others. The women of Pinsk were spurred on to form their own organization by the difficult social conditions in the town after the First World War and the Balakhovich pogroms, and also by the fund-raising activities for the upbuilding of Palestine and the practical realization of Zionist aims after the Balfour Declaration. They founded a WIZO branch in the town, which was very successful in the fields of social work and education, as well as in fund-raising. The WIZO office was headed by the following ladies: R. Rabinowitsch, A. Burstein, S. Kahan, H. Budkovski, M. Rubin, R. Stillerman and others.

The workers' parties, which were opposed to religious education and were fervent advocates of the use of Yiddish and of socialist indoctrination (especially the "Bund"), set up their own educational institutions, in which the language of instruction was Yiddish: an orphans' home, and a primary school bearing the name of M. Gleiberman which was outstanding amongst Pinsk schools for its teaching standards and cultural attainments. It had more than 250 pupils, mostly workers' children, and was supported by the ZYSHO (Zentrale Yiddische Schulorganizatsye). There was also a club for adults called "Arbeiter Winkel" and a youth organization called "Zukunft". The left wing of *Poalei Tsion* opened two primary schools, and also evening classes. These various institutions were directed by a joint board of intellectuals and workers: Leizer Levin, A. Y. Shlakman, Temchin, Motel Fishko, H. K. Busel (of the left-wing of *Poalei Tsion*), and others.

Many Jewish parents sent their sons and daughters to study at the "Chechik high school" where, though it was Jewish owned and under Jewish direction, the language of instruction was Polish and the pupils received a government matriculation certificate. The syllabus, however, included Jewish history. Although

there were assimilationist Jews from Galicia and Poland on the teaching staff, the Jewish atmosphere in the pupils' homes and elsewhere outside the school (the Jewish political movements) preserved the pupils' national consciousness. Just as the "modern *heder*" proved itself stronger than the Pinsk "Realschule" in the time of Russian rule, so in the Polish period the idea of the Jewish national revival was powerful enough to prevent assimilationist tendencies from having any adverse effect on the Jewish consciousness of the younger generation.

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We are now nearing the end of the history of the Pinsk Jewish Community. Our intension this time has been to evaluate, in the light of all the extant material, the various elements and factors of which the history of the Pinsk community, my birth place, was composed, and to reflect the various aspects of this history.

In the Jewish social spectrum of the Pinsk and Karlin communities in the last phase of their existence we thus find, at one extreme, the Zionist *Haluts* movement which established in Palestine "the settlement in memory of the Pinsk martyrs", and at the other extreme, a group of assimilationist Jews who came to Pinsk from the outside — teachers, lawyers, doctors, and government officials, who were remote from Judaism and who aspired to become part of the Polish people. This period came to an end when Pinsk was occupied by the Russian communists, who put an end to all Jewish activity in the city (1939-1941). They were followed by the Nazis, who exterminated the Jews of Pinsk, destroyed the Jewish cemeteries and smashed to pieces the memorials of centuries of Jewish life.

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A community's most lasting memorial is its history



Monument in memory of Pinsk's Nazi victims, erected by the Soviets (1966) with plaque according to their wording: "In memory of 30 thousand Soviet citizens tortured and shot by the Fascist German Occupiers in 1942—1943 in this area"

THE "ROTHSCHILDS" OF PINSK AND KARLIN
A HISTORICAL EVALUATION

by

Dr. Wolf Zeev Rabinowitsch

"Rothschild" is not just a family name, but a concept designating historically creative spiritual values. The special power of the "Rothschilds" did not lie simply in their wealth, since there were numerous other wealthy Jews. What distinguished the "Rothschilds" was their possession of three essentially Jewish qualities — respect for the Torah, provision of employment for their brethren, and gemiluth hasadim (charitable aid to both individuals and the whole community). Such "Rothschilds" came to the fore in various towns in Lithuania and White Russia (e.g., in Shklov, Grodno, Biknov and other places) but these were for the most part sporadic individual cases. In Pinsk and Karlin, by contrast, there arose whole families of philanthropists who constituted a special social phenomenon unparalleled in any of the other Jewish communities. These families were distinguished, first of all by their lineage, wealth, and unity. They were closely related to each other either by blood or by their practice of inter-marriage, the latter resulting from their consciousness of family unity and their desire to preserve their "purity of descent", since their sense of belonging to the Jewish aristocracy made them zealous guardians of their family tradition. However, although many of them kept themselves aloof and formed a seemingly closed, exclusive "clique", this characteristic did not impair their responsiveness to either individual or communal needs. They displayed a reverence for Jewish values and a special warmth of affection for their fellow-Jews. They built economic enterprises in Pinsk and Karlin, developed industry and commerce, and established public and private banks, while at the same time endeavouring to follow the injunction that "man does not live by bread alone". In addition to their constructive economic activity, they were

also remarkable for their generous philanthropic work in providing for religious needs, in the field of education, in the setting up of various institutions of social welfare, and in support of charitable societies. In Pinsk and Karlin they built synagogues, religious schools, hospitals for the poor, old age homes, and the like. They also provided for the proper upkeep of the institutions which they had founded, making lavish financial contributions for this purpose. Furthermore, they rendered assistance to their fellow-Jews in times of urgent need, such as the aftermath of fires, expulsions, and various other disasters. They also made use of the civic standing accorded them by their wealth to intercede with the secular authorities on behalf of both the Jewish community as a whole and its individual members, whenever necessary. Starting from the end of the 18th century, throughout the 19th century, and continuing into the 20th century down to the extermination of Pinsk Jewry by the Nazis — in all, for a period of five generations — they left a deep imprint on the history of their communities. In retrospect, it can be seen that these families constituted the aristocracy of Lithuanian Jewry during all this long time. Every one of their members was the bearer of various Jewish and general cultural values, like most of the Jewish intelligentsia in the 19th and 20th centuries, though even within the same family there were considerable differences of attitude, in a positive or negative sense, to these same values. Thanks to their education, their social position, and their active participation in both communal and general affairs, every member of these families is representative to a greater or lesser degree — of some well known type in the Jewish public of their time. This is true even of those among the latter-day descendants of these families who followed the path of assimi-

lation to the point of no return. Every single one of them set his own example and left his own distinctive legacy behind him. Thus the legacy left by the founder of the Pinsk "family", Shaul Karliner, was very different from that left by some of the last of the Louriés. The history of these families thus reflects, in microcosm, the various factors and tendencies which were at work shaping the larger history of the Jewish community of their town and of Jewish society as a whole — some of them were highly conservative, others adopted the ideas of the *Haskalah* and Zionism, and still others created the conditions for the development of the socialist movements, though usually without themselves participating in their activities. In view of all this, it is impossible to write the history of the Pinsk and Karlin Jewish communities without a proper description and evaluation of the activities of these Jewish individuals who deserve to be called "the Rothschilds of Pinsk and Karlin".

The following are the families of Pinsk "Rothschilds", in chronological order: Shaul Karliner (Levin) and his sons, Hayyah Lourié and her descendants, and the Eliasbergs and Halperns who married the sons and daughters of the Levin and Lourié families.

The Levin Family

The founder of this "dynasty" was Shaul Karliner (1775?—1834), the son of R. Moshe. His long and interesting will shows him to have been a pious, god-fearing Jew, with cabbalistic leanings, and a rich man. At his death he left "land, movable property, goods, cash, and debts". During his life he built two batei midrash [synagogues], one in Pinsk and the other in Karlin. In his will, he gives instructions that, after his death, provision should be made from his fortune for his poor relatives, "the scholar being given preference over the ignorant man, for the defraying of wedding expenses, for the redemption of Jewish captives, for the repair of my beth midrash... and for the poor of the Holy Land...". He also allocated sums of money to various institutions, such as the Pinsk Bikkur Holim [Society for Visiting the Sick] and Talmud Torah, the Karlin Bikkur Holim and Hevrah Kaddishah [burial society],

and the charity fund. He was evidently one of the communal leaders, if not actually the head of the community. Thus, he writes in his will: "I did my duty in my lifetime by my fellow-townsmen... All my life I served them honestly and conscientiously". He was also influential in the neighbouring small towns — Liubeshov (Libeshei), Stolin, Pohost near Libchin, Pohost beyond the river, and Horodnoye — and bequeathed sums for the support of their Jewish communities. "In all the small towns... let them proclaim in their synagogues... that they forgive me if I gave them any advice and (God forbid!) it was not good, even though I did not act for my own personal benefit, neither against any individual nor against the community... The distribution of my bequests to charity shall continue down the generations and the injunctions of this will shall be performed for a thousand generations... And the sums to charity shall be paid in full till the rebuilding of the Temple".

Printed on the title pages of the book "*Efes Damim*" ["No Blood"], written against the blood-libel in Russia by the *haskalah* author Y.B. Levinsohn (Warsaw 1884), there is a letter from the well-known rabbi, R. Aryeh-Leib Katzenellenbogen of Brisk (Brest-Litovsk) in Lithuania, to Shaul Karliner (1833) requesting him to assist the writer "with payment and money for printing... seeing that Your Honour shows concern for the above-mentioned scholar, especially when the occasion calls. Therefore, let Your Honour act... and also be so good as to rouse others to bestir themselves and send him money, so that he may devote himself wholly to this task". The wording of this letter testifies to Shaul Karliner's standing in Lithuanian Jewry. According to a Russian source, he was the owner of the Telekhan estate, close to Pinsk, and rendered Russia loyal service in the war against Napoleon, for which a popular tradition relates that he was honoured by the Tsar Alexander I. He was popularly depicted as a powerful personality, "the communal leader of the generation", and became the subject of various legends¹. One of his descendants, Anton Lourié made a detailed study

1. Yosef Zekharia... Stern, *Zekher Yehosef* p. 208, Warsaw 1860. S. Ginsburg, *Megillah Rabbath Inyan*, Yeda Am, Vol. VIII, No. 26, pp. 36—39, Tel Aviv 1963.

of his will and his personality². The terms of his will indicate that he was strongly opposed to hasidism, which in his time was spreading in Karlin and its surroundings.

Shaul Karliner's sons were also remarkable for their good works.

His eldest son Zalman Levin, is said to have been a timber merchant and philanthropist, "the great and glorious gevir [rich man]"³.

Shaul Karliner's second son, Moshe-Yitshak Levin (1802—1872), was a rich timber-merchant, who also apparently traded in corn and fats and was employed as a government contractor. Together with his sister, Hayyah Lourié, he built the paupers' hospital in Karlin⁴. He also had a beth midrash — built by his father — in Karlin, which bore his name till modern times. Between Purim and Pesach, the street next to this beth midrash was thronged with the poor of the town who, as reported by an eye-witness (Mordekhai Kerman), were invited by Moshe-Yitshak Levin to come there to receive ma'oth hittim [money for matsah]. The shamash of the beth midrash would draw up the lists of the poor and present them to Moshe-Yitshak for signature. The first to be thus authorized to receive this free matsah straight from the mill were the poor of the immediate neighbourhood, and after them came the other paupers of the town. Many were sent their share secretly by special messenger, to save them embarrassment. Besides the ma'oth hittim, Moshe-Yitshak used also to distribute potatoes and other Pesach commodities to the poor. On the days preceding the Festival, chits for the four cups of wine [to be drunk at the Seder] were handed out in his beth midrash. The crowd of applicants was so great that the regular students of the beth midrash had to suspend their studies during these days. One of these students was the

young Moshe Aharon Shatskes, the later famous maskil and author of "Ha-Mafteah" (Warsaw 1866, 1869). Another maskil, R. Yehezkeel Slutsker, who was "well versed in the deeper meaning of the torah and an acute and discerning interpreter of the profound sayings of the sages, took up residence in the beth midrash of R. Moshe Yitshak Levin"⁵. Moshe Yitshak used to bake matsah shemurah in his own home, under his own and his sons' supervision. On the eve of Yom Kippur he used to visit the cemetery with his sons, and on leaving he would hold out his hand to the shamash to receive his gift of a piece of honey-cake, just like all the other visitors, including even the poorest among them, to show the equality of all mortals on the Day of Judgment. Altogether, Moshe Yitshak Levin was a shining example of the life lived by a Pinsk philanthropist in those days. After his death, Nahum-Meir Shaikevich wrote of him as follows: "A bitter cry is raised in Pinsk and a great disaster has come upon Karlin with the death of R. Moshe-Yitshak Levin, who passed away on the 6th Elul, 1872. Thousands of people are lamenting and mourning the passing of their town's glory and the loss of its crown. Death has robbed Karlin of its greatest philanthropist, the famed giver of charity, helper of the poor and father of the wretched, R. Moshe-Yitshak Levin, who was renowned throughout Russia for his many benevolences, and who all his life worked for the good of those that sought his help... For he was their father, their helper, and their protector... always ready to aid them with his generosity. It is no exaggeration to say that he was one of the noblest men... of our generation. Thousands of families were supported by him. From all over Russia crowds of wretched people came flocking to him... Every morning, when he entered his house of prayer, he would put on his tallith and set his hat on the table, and all that were wretched and bitter in spirit would place their petitions and requests, written on pieces of paper, in the hat. After this wonderfully generous man had finished his prayers, he would put on his hat, taking great care that not one of the pieces of paper should fall out, and hurry home. There he

2. A. Lourié, *Di Tsavoe fun a Pinsker Baal ha-Bayith fun Onheib Neintsenten Yorhundert*, YIVO Bleter, Vol XIII, Nos. 5/6, pp. 390—427, 1938.

3. *Hamelits*, 1868, No. 5, p. 36 (where the reference is to Zalman the eldest son of Shaul Karliner, and not to Zalman the son of Moshe-Yitshak Levin, since the writer of the article goes on to mention Moshe-Yitshak, the second son of Shaul Karliner).

4. *Hamelits*, *ibid*, and 1880, No. 4, pp. 277—278.

5. A. D. Dobzevich, *Lo Dubbim ve-lo Yaar*, p. 41, Berdichev 1890.

would not touch any food until he had read all the letters and performed the requests of all those that sought his help... God granted him four fine sons... He was esteemed by Jews and Christians alike... He greatly revered students of the *torah*, and also esteemed the scholars of the *haskalah*... Thousands of people... had their distress relieved by the help of this generous man. Many say that the sums which he donated to charity in the course of his life amounted (according to the account found written down in his private records) to one million and forty roubles... On the day of R. Moshe-Yitshak's ascent to heaven all the shops were closed and all the people, young and old, assembled... to accompany him to his eternal home... About twenty thousand people filled the streets surrounding his house... And when they came to the synagogue, which his noble father, R. Shaul Levin of blessed memory, had built, they placed his bier on the ground... and all of them stood in silence to hear the words of the *maggid* of the Pinsk congregation, who was about to eulogize the deceased"⁶.

A different form of philanthropic activity was chosen by Wolf Levin, Shaul Karliner's third son. He too traded in timber, and perhaps also in corn and fats, and was a government contractor. As early as the beginning of the second half of the 19th century, he had the idea of encouraging the members of his community to take up a life of productive physical labour, by founding an agricultural settlement for them just outside Pinsk. In furtherance of his project, he applied to the central Russian government in Petersburg for permission to purchase an area of land in the vicinity of his native town. In his written request, he explained his idea in detail, and undertook to bear alone all the heavy outlay involved in settling the Jews on the land. When his request was granted, he purchased some land about seven kilometres to the north of the town, close to the village of Ivanik, put up houses and fitted them out, and bought cattle and flocks and agricultural equipment, all at his own expense. Not only were the settlers provided in advance with all their requirements, but they were also exempted from payment of government taxes and their sons were

not liable to military service. Fifteen families responded to Wolf Levin's call.

However, it soon became clear that these first settlers — most of whom were from the nearby small town of Lohishin — had only responded to the call in order to get exemption from military service and payment of taxes, and not at all out of any real interest in the founder's idea. They lived in Ivanik, but continued to run their businesses in Pinsk; and when factories were subsequently established in Pinsk, their sons and daughters went to work in them, renting the fields to Gentiles from the nearby village. Nevertheless, the produce of the little agricultural work done by some of the settlers on their farms provided them with a source of livelihood in summer, and in their old age. Much later, during the economic crisis that Pinsk went through at the end of the First World War, the inhabitants of Ivanik kept themselves alive by turning to agriculture. They received assistance from the "Alliance" and "Ort" organizations, and some of the settlers remained faithful to the noble idea conceived and devotedly forwarded by Wolf Levin of Karlin, though he himself was completely forgotten by them in the end. Tradition records that Wolf Levin also defrayed the whole cost of building the *beth midrash* known as the "*Pinsker Kloyz*", which was the center of talmudical studies in Pinsk. Here the *Av* [president] of the Pinsk *Beth-Din* [religious court], the *gaon* R. Elazar-Moshe Hurwitz, used to pray, together with a member of his court, the *dayyan* [religious judge] R. Yaakov-Meir Hurwitz, and also the great talmudic scholar, R. Barukh Epstein, and others. At the end of his life, Wolf Levin lost all his fortune in a business law-suit with another estate-owner. He died, it would seem, in 1870⁷.

Akhsah, Saul Karliner's third daughter, was married to R. Yaakov-Meir Padva⁸. He first lived in Pinsk, and subsequently became the *Av Beth-Din* of Brisk. He wrote the following

6. *Hamelits*, 1872, No. 2, p. 79.

7. *Toysent Yor Pinsk*, pp. 242 ff, New York 1941. M. Kerman, *Meine Zikhreines*, 100 *Yor Pinsk*, p. 5 (stencil) [Haifa 1953]. S. Ginsburg, *Historische Werk*, Vol. I, pp. 225—227, New York 1937.

8. *Lourié, Di Tsavoe*, p. 423. Y. T. Eisenstat and S. Y. Viener, *Daath Kedoshim*, p. 212, Petersburg 1897/8.

works: "Mekor Mayyim Hayyim, Ktho-neth Passim", "Sheeloth u-Teshuvot" [Responsa]. His son, Aharon-Moshe Padva, lived in Karlin and wrote "Beur Haram" ["Commentary of R. Aharon-Moshe"] a commentary on the midrash "Shoher Tov" (Warsaw, 1865). In connection with this work, Aharon-Moshe used to correspond from Pinsk with the well-known midrashic scholar, Shelomo Buber⁹.

Shaul Karliner's fifth daughter, Dinah, also built a synagogue in Karlin (in Siver Street) which continued to bear her name ("Dinehles Shulchen") right to the end. She died in 1865¹⁰.

Meir Levin, Moshe-Yitshak Levin's eldest son, followed the example set by his father and grandfather in their way of life and concern for the welfare of their community. He was one of the first Pinsk merchants to buy a steamship and set it to plying between Pinsk and the Ukraine (before 1862). A man of wide Jewish and secular learning, he concerned himself with the upkeep of the Karlin Talmud Torah, and saw to the establishment in Pinsk of heders for the study of the talmud. He brought in melammedim [childrens' teachers] from various Lithuanian towns, taking care to ensure that they should be conscientious and properly qualified for their task. He also befriended them in various ways. They used to pray in his synagogue in Karlin, which bore his name ("Meiches Shulchen", or "Meir Levins Shulchen"), and eat the third Sabbath meal at his table. In his house too they would eat the last meal before a fast; and they sat down to his table for the Purim feast. Meir Levin also had close connections with the Russian government authorities, on account of his commercial undertakings and his social standing in the town. Thus, for example, whenever the provincial governor visited Pinsk, he would call on Meir Levin to discuss the affairs of the town with him.

Among the responsa of the Karlin Av Beth-Din, the gaon R. David Friedman¹¹, we find one sent by the author "to my very dear friend, the

perfect and glorious gevir [rich man] our teacher R. Meir Halevi Levin, from here in Karlin-Pinsk...". This responsum, which deals with Maimonides' remarks on the laws governing temple contributions, is very long and detailed, and its contents indicate that Meir Levin's original question was, characteristically, that of a real talmudic scholar. Indeed, Meir Levin's son-in-law, Aharon Lourié, a man of wide Jewish and general education, refers to his father-in-law, in a letter to J.L. Gordon dated 19 Iyyar, 1863, as follows: "The great rabbi, R. Meir Levin... a well-educated and intelligent man, who can vie with the greatest in the land in knowledge of the torah and also desires the light of civilization [i.e. general culture]".

Meir Levin moved to Kiev, apparently in 1875, since in 1876 his place as director of the Karlin Talmud Torah was taken by one of his relatives, Mikhal the son of Yosef Ettinger. In 1879, when the Russian government called on the Jews to elect a committee for the clarification of various religious and social Jewish questions, Meir Levin was one of the three members chosen. The chronicler Yaacov Lifschitz, writes of him: "The one talmudic scholar on the committee, the famous rav and gaon R. Meir Levin of Kiev, was elected in Minsk...". And in 1882, Meir Levin was chosen as a member of the committee which was sent to Petersburg to intervene with the Russian Government on behalf of the Jews. The same chronicler writes of him: "The Kiev community sent to Petersburg its leading dignitary, the rich rav and gaon of noble descent, R. Meir Levin of blessed memory, who was on very friendly terms with Baron Ginsburg and highly respected by all the other Petersburg aristocrats... It was thought particularly fortunate that R. Meir Levin was there [in Petersburg], because he was the representative of the millionaire R. Yisrael Brodsky of blessed memory from Kiev, the head of the Brodsky family"¹².

Of Moshe-Yitshak Levin's son, Zalman, it is related by the Pinsk Jewish writer, Nahum-Meir Shaikevich, that, after his father's death, he prayed to him to "intercede with Him That Dwells On

9. The Shvadron Collection, Padva Aharon Moshe, The National and University Library, Jerusalem.

10. Lourié, Di Tsavoe, p. 423.

11. Friedman, David, Sheeloth David, Yore Deah, sect 17, p. 69, Petrikov 1913

12. Hatsefirah, 1876, No. 15, pp. 114—115, Y. Lifshits, Zikhron Yaakov, Pt. 2, p. 206, Kovno-Slobodka 1927 and Pt. 3, pp. 100—105, 1968 (no place of publication).

High to strengthen our heart to follow in your paths and to do your deeds”¹³.

The Levin family began at this time to move out of Pinsk, and its influence there came to an end before the last quarter of the 19th century.

Hayyah Lourié and Her Sons

The heirs to the Levin “dynasty” in Pinsk, both genealogically and in terms of social status and way of life, were the Lourié family, with Hayyah (1791—1873), the daughter of Shaul Karliner, at their head. After being twice widowed — by the death (in 1816) of her first husband, Gad-Asher Rokeah, the son of the Pinsk Av Beth Din R. Yehoshua, who was the grandson of the gaon R. Elazar Rokeah of Amsterdam, and then again (in 1835) by the death of her second husband, Aharon Lourié, the son of R. Iser Lourié of Mohilev — Hayyah herself took over the direction of the family business in corn, timber, fat, and salt. Taking advantage of Pinsk’s central geographical position, she developed her trading connections to the south and west, between the fertile region of the Ukraine and the Baltic countries and Poland. As a sign of the Russian government’s recognition of the great importance of her contribution to the development of Pinsk as a port-town and communications centre, the Tsar Alexander II made Hayyah Lourié and her descendants “honorary citizens” of the Russian empire. The first and foremost beneficiaries of her enterprises were, naturally, the Jews of Pinsk. One of her greatest services to her fellow-Jews was rendered during the famine which came upon the predominantly Jewish populated province of Kovno during the drought years 1866—1867. The starving populace were compelled to abandon their homes and possessions and make their way to the southern provinces. Large numbers of migrants streamed into Pinsk, seeking to continue their way southwards by steamship. Hayyah Lourié came to the aid of the wretched refugees by setting up a large camp for them in Pinsk where she fed and clothed them, provided for all their needs, and saw to it that they were transported southwards to their destination in steamboats belonging to her sons, Moshe and David Lourié, and her nephew, Meir Levin. She also supplied them with money and with food

for the journey. For two whole years she directed this rescue operation, and thereby saved thousands from hunger and even from death by starvation. If such was her concern for the poor of other towns, her devotion to the poor of her own town can readily be imagined. In about 1865 she built four charitable institutions in Karlin: the Talmud Torah, the hospital (together with her brother, Moshe-Yitshak Levin), a synagogue (which was named after her “Hayyehles Shulchen”), and an old-age home (together with her relative, Feigel Levin). Representations of these four buildings were engraved on her tombstone. Hayyah inherited her father’s hatred of hasidism. Near to her home in Karlin stood the “court” of the hasidic tsaddik, R. Aharon the Second of Karlin¹⁴, and its noisiness, especially on the Festivals, disturbed her quiet. This led to an open quarrel between her and the hasidim, which resulted in the rebbe being forced by police-order to leave Karlin and transfer his “court” to the nearby small town of Stolin (before 1864). This happening shows how great the influence of the Lourié family was in Pinsk and Karlin in those days. Hayyah Lourié died in 1873. An eye-witness (Mordekhai Kerman) recounts that the books recording the acts of charity performed by her and the institutions erected by her were placed on her coffin, which was then carried to its last resting-place, stopping at the synagogue that she had built¹⁵. She had also been a generous supporter of the Pinsk Talmud Torah, the building of which, according to a newspaper report from the year of its foundation, was made possible by her generosity¹⁶.

Hayyah Lourié was connected by marriage with the family of the well-known rav, R. Akiva Eiger through the union of Heshe Rokeah (b. 1814), her eldest son by her first husband, with the daughter of R. Eiger’s son, R. Shelomo. One of Heshe Rokeah’s most intimate friends was his wife’s brother, R. Yisrael Eiger, who was the rav of Antopol, a small town close to Pinsk, and who subsequently resided in Pinsk where there

13. Hamelits, 1872, No. 11, p. 80.

14. S.M. Rabinowitsch, *Al Pinsk, Karlin ve-Yosheveihen, Talpiyoth, Pt. Kehilloth Yaakov*, p. 16. Berdichev 1895.

15. W. Z. Rabinowitsch, *Lithuanian Hasidism*, London 1970.

16. Hamelits, 1862, No. 2, pp. 21—23; idem, 1868, No. 5, pp. 35—36.



Moshe-Yitshak Levin (1802—1872)
Shaul Karliner's second son



Wolf Levin
Shaul Karliner's third son



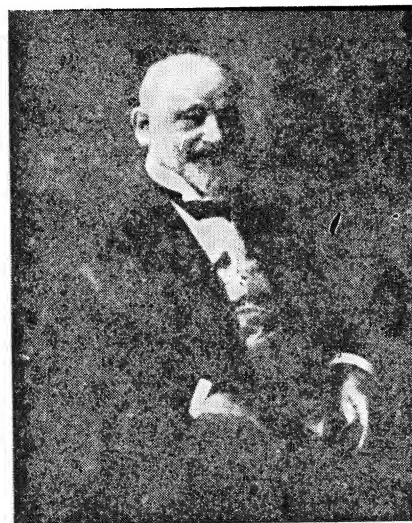
Hayyah Lourié
(Pinsk 1867)



Heshe Rokeah (1814 — ?)
Hayyah Lourié's eldest son



Gad-Asher Levin-Rokeah (1815/16—1877)



Yosef Halpern (died c. 1919 in Vienna)



The house of Gad-Asher Levin and Yosef Halpern, as an Orphan's Home (1921)



Georg Halpern (1878—1962)



Bernhard (Beni) Halpern



Yaakov Eliasberg (1881 — 1961)

was a synagogue (in Peretz Street) named after him ("R. Yisrael Eigers Shulchen"). Heshe Rokeah's father-in-law, R. Shelomo Eiger, writes of him as follows: "Praise be to God, my first son-in-law, Heshel Rokeah who lives in Pinsk, is also a delightful man, keen-minded and well-versed in the torah, pious and God-fearing, a Hebrew writer, owner of a property amounting to from ten to thirteen roubles. His mother is a very rich woman, with a known (not estimated) fortune of 150 thousand roubles, and he is of distinguished lineage, a grandson of the gaon, R. Elazar the Av Beth-Din of Amsterdam... author of the book 'Maaseh Rokeah'. He was also loved and respected by my revered father and teacher, R. Akiva Eiger, who often proudly referred to him as in truth a great talmudic scholar. He is now about 24 years of age"¹⁷. Heshe Rokeah was the leading supporter of the Karlin Talmud Torah¹⁸. His appearance in the photograph reproduced here shows him to have been a strictly orthodox Jew; and the contrast with the photographs of his uncles, Moshe-Yitshak and Wolf Levin, and his brother, Moshe Lourié, is no doubt indicative of the differences of outlook found in the Pinsk Jewish community of those times on educational and cultural questions.

A place of special importance is reserved for Hayyah Lourié's second son, Gad-Asher Levin-Rokeah (or Godye, as he was popularly called). Like his uncle, Wolf Levin, Godye gave a great deal of thought to ways and means of training the Jewish youth of his town for productive work. But, whereas his uncle sought to achieve this aim by agricultural labour, Gad-Asher Levin took as his slogan the Jewish saying: "A man should always teach his son a craft". Both these philanthropists aimed at realizing in the Pinsk of their time, and by their own private means, the programme that was later carried out on a national scale by the "Alliance" and "Ort" organizations. Gad-Asher Levin had a traditional Jewish education including, besides the talmud and the commentaries on it, such works as Maimonides' "Guide to the Perplexed" and "Yad

ha-Hazakah" and Yehudah Halevi's "Cuzari". He began his business career as a partner in the family timber and steamboat concerns. Then, for personal reasons originating in his outlook and character (which he is thought to have inherited in part, together with some of his wealth, from his grandfather, Shaul Karliner), he parted company with his relatives and set up his own business, run by new methods. He owned the steamboats "Pina" and "Nieman" which plied between Pinsk, Kremenchug and other towns (1868). His "credo" in life was based on two main principles. First, he stressed both in theory and in practice the enlightened ethical values of Judaism and, though a practising Jew, avoided any purely formal religious observance. His criticism of the prevailing forms of Jewish belief and of the character of the believing Jew involved him in numerous clashes, particularly with the members of his own family. Shunning public honour and hating sycophants, he held firmly to his own individual views. Indeed, it was truly said of him that if he had not been a wealthy man and generous giver of donations, the rabbis would have decreed his excommunication or ordered him to be flogged, so "unorthodox" was he. The second of his principles was summed up in the saying: "He that lives by the labour of his hands is greater than the God-fearing man". He refused to support people who were capable of working for their living, on the grounds that "man is required to provide for himself". The help he gave to others was therefore of a constructive nature, rather than purely philanthropic. Thus, in the sixties of the last century, he made it known to the members of his community that whoever wished to teach his son a craft could apply to him and he would defray the expense of the boy's training. Since to be a "craftsman" was in those days considered by Jews a despised occupation, this generous offer was not taken up even by the poor. Thereupon Gad-Asher proceeded to carry out his plan by collecting together a number of orphan children, especially from the "Linishches" quarter of the town where the poor lived, and every year placing thirty to thirty five of them as apprentices with tailors, cobblers, carpenters, watchmakers, and the like. He drew up a contract with these craftsmen, specifying the period of training, terms of maintenance, and conditions of work, and paid out of his own pocket for every

17. Iggeroth Soferim... mi-Mishpahath Eiger-Sofer... sect. 54, p. 70, Vienna 1933.

18. Hamaggid, 1880, No. 35, pp. 300—301, where, like his brother Gad-Asher, he is given the family name Levin, and not Rokah or Rokeah.

young apprentice, stipulating only that he should learn the particular trade for three years, till he became thoroughly proficient in it, and during all this period be provided with food and lodging by his master¹⁹. He himself personally made sure that the boys were given a real apprenticeship, and did not simply become servants in their masters' homes. He also made provision for their Jewish education and for *melammedim* to teach them *torah*. These lessons were given in "Dinehles Shulchen", the synagogue named after his aunt and mother-in-law, Dinah. Every Sabbath Gad-Asher Levin would come to this synagogue and examine "his" boys on what they had learnt from their teacher. At the same time, he would ask each one of them about what had happened in his little world during the previous week. He would also find out if the apprentices were observing the *mitsvot* properly. He saw to it that they were properly clothed, providing them at his own expense with uniform outfits for week days and Sabbaths, and for summer and winter. We have an eye-witness account of how, every Sabbath, "his" boys used to walk together, all dressed in the same clothes, through the town on their way to the synagogue. These boys were popularly known as "Godye's Troop" ("Godyes Polk"). It need hardly be added how devotedly he cared for these boys when they were ill. Indeed, he bore alone the burden of functions that would normally be carried out by a whole organization. At the end of the period of apprenticeship, he gave each youth a sum of money to help set him up on his own in his trade or to cover the expense of further training. In this way, he set up two hundred and fourteen of the young Jewish men of his town as qualified artisans, sending forty of them to Russia for further training. Some of his trainees moved to other towns, but the majority remained in Pinsk. It is said that in South Africa there was for several decades an association of Jewish immigrants called "Godye's Troop", whose members were former trainees of Gad-Asher Levin. His concern for vocational training and Jewish education was equalled by his support for general education. He used himself to defray the tuition fees for needy youngsters at the Pinsk "Realschule" [High School for Sciences], and that at a time when the Jews of Pinsk were

opposed to educating their children in schools of any kind, let alone a gentile school. Gad-Asher's financial support of these pupils is thus eloquent testimony to his views on education. At the same time, he also supported the Talmud Torah institutions and their pupils. He likewise provided assistance for adults, though in the form of productive aid rather than by gifts of charity. Thus, he would buy a horse for a poor carter, and would help poor shopkeepers by loans for the purchase of stock. There was a special arrangement in Pinsk whereby in winter the grocers used to give the carters food on credit, to be repaid in the summer when the carters' business was good, and Gad-Asher used to guarantee these debts²⁰. In memory of his wife, who was killed in Germany in a railway accident, he donated fifteen thousand roubles for the annual purchase, during the intermediate days of *Sukkoth*, of winter clothes for the old and infirm. Being estranged from the other members of his family, he carried out all his public work alone, performing his philanthropic acts with the minimum of publicity. Before his death, he distributed sums of money to charitable institutions and to his poor relations. In his will he bequeathed one of his houses for needy old people. For many years, his descendants used to mark the day of his death by distributing to the poor and sick clothes bought with money from his legacy. His personality and opinions are reflected in his will. He died on 22nd Kislev, 1877²¹. The Jews of Pinsk did not forget Godye. On the 25th anniversary of his death, an article in his memory was published in the journal, "Pinsker Stot-Luach" (Vilna 1903/4). And on the fiftieth anniversary, the leading members of the community gathered together in his house, which had been used as a home for orphans during and after the First World War, for a memorial service to commemorate the man and his work. The older people present, who still remembered Gad-Asher, recalled his views and his efforts to improve the social, economic, and cultural situation in his days, and spoke about the changes that had occurred in the town since his death — how an

20. *Hatsefirah*, 1877, No. 47, p. 373.

21. Z. Rabinowitsch, *R. Gad-Asher Levin mi-Pinsk*, Heavar, Vol. XIV, pp. 185—190, Tel Aviv 1967. *Gad-Asher Levin, Pinsker Stot Luah* pp. 41—49, Vilna 1903/4

19. *Hamelits*, 1880, No. 14, pp. 277—278.

industrial proletariat had come into existence and Pinsk had become a workers' town.

The Halpern Family

Among the men responsible for the creation of opportunities of work for the Jews of Pinsk were Gad-Asher Levin's two sons-in-law (he had no sons of his own). The first of these was Yosef Halpern (the husband of his daughter, Beileh). In 1897, Yosef Halpern bought and extended the match-factory, which became a source of livelihood for hundreds of Pinsk families. 400—500 workers were employed in it, 80—90% of them Jews. This was the second largest factory, after the Lourié works, in Pinsk, and one of the largest in all Russia. Its products were sold as far afield as southern Russia, the Caucasus, and the towns along the shores of the Caspian Sea. Here too, as in the Lourié works, a Jewish atmosphere prevailed. The workers included both orthodox Jews and also members of the "Bund" who, at the time of the 1905 revolution, emigrated to America and were among the founders and active members of the well-known "Pinsker Brentsch 210 Arbeiter Ring" organization in New York; while many of the clerks in the factory belonged to the Zionist movement. In his public benefactions, Yosef Halpern showed particular concern for social institutions. He was lifelong president of the Pinsk hospital, where the town's poor received treatment free, and always used his social standing and personal influence to raise funds for its upkeep. In 1880, when the hospital was in the throes of a grave financial crisis, he saved it by prevailing on his fellow-Jews to make contributions to it as thank-offerings for being called up to the Reading of the Law in synagogue. Together with members of the Lourié family, Yosef Halpern headed the *Somekh Nofelim* [Supporter of the Falling] charitable society in Karlin, for the provision of aid to people who had lost their money and needed financial support to enable them to keep their businesses going. And he was also one of the directors of the Karlin Old-Age Home established by Hayyah Lourié.

Gad-Asher Levin's second son-in-law was Shemuel Rabinovich, one of the owners of the Karlin candle-factory, which employed 120 workers, almost all of them Jews.

When Yosef Halpern died in Vienna in about 1919, his son, Beni (Bernard), took over the management of the match-factory, which he completely rebuilt after it had been burnt down (in 1923). 15% of the town's Jewish population worked in this factory. However, under pressure from the anti-semitic Polish government, Beni Halpern was in 1925 obliged to sell the factory to a Swedish trust and agree, in fact, to its nationalization. This expropriation brought to an end one of the largest industrial concerns of its kind, founded and operated by Jews, in Russia. It is related that, when the new Gentile owners of the plant demanded of Beni Halpern, who was still the manager, that he should gradually lay off the Jewish workers, he replied that, in that case, he himself should be the first to be dismissed — a step forbidden under the terms of the sale of the factory.

Apart from the regular contributions that he made to various institutions in Pinsk, in particular to the "Oze" and "Orphans Home", Beni Halpern also showed practical concern for his fellow-Jews in times of special need. After the First World War, when many refugees arrived in Pinsk, while many Pinsk Jews themselves returned to their homes without any means of livelihood, he was chairman of the committee set up by the "Jewish Representatives in the Polish Sejm" to help these unfortunate people. In 1924 he was one of the founders of the Jewish commercial and industrial bank in Pinsk, and served as chairman of its board of directors. The former residence of Yosef Halpern, which he had inherited from Gad-Asher Levin, was made over by Beni Halpern to the Orphans' Home set up by the Jews of Pinsk after the First World War and the pogrom perpetrated by Bulak Balakhovich's troops. Like his father before him, Beni Halpern did not join the Zionist Organization. He spent his last years in Warsaw, where he was killed, together with his wife (Sonia, the daughter of Yeshayahu Berlin of Riga), in the ghetto. He had no children.

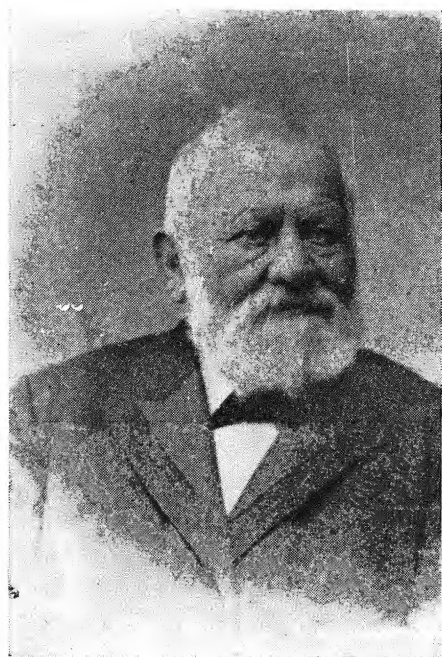
Yosef Halpern's second son Georg (or Gad), who was born a few months after the death of his grandfather, Gad-Asher Levin, and named after him, joined the Zionist movement and for many years headed its economic bodies. He was one of the directors of the Keren Hayesod (together with his fellow-townsmen, Yitshak-Asher Naidich), was elected at the twelfth Zionist Organization, and was a member of the first board of governors of

the Keren Hayesod and a member of the executive committee of the World Zionist Organization. In Jerusalem he founded the large insurance company "Migdal". At the fifth Congress he was a member of the "Democratic Faction" of Weizmann and Motzkin, and from then onwards remained one of Weizmann's loyal supporters and one of his advisers on economic matters affecting the Zionist Organization. Weizmann's letters to and about Georg Halpern show, in particular, that Halpern was one of Weizmann's loyal supporters in the activities of the Democratic Faction, in the project of establishing the Hebrew University, and in the opposition to the Uganda plan for Jewish settlement. The two of them, together with Grigory Lourié, Shaul Lourié and the Eliasberg family — see below — used to meet in Pinsk, both out of personal friendship and also to discuss the problems of the Zionist movement at that time. When the match-factory in Pinsk was about to be sold to Gentiles, he stipulated that the Jewish workers should continue to be employed there, and that the new owners should not be allowed to compete with the "Nur" match-factory that Gershon Weizmann had set up in Acre in 1924. Georg Halpern wrote his doctoral thesis on "The Jewish Workers of London". Although he emigrated from Pinsk in his youth to Western Europe, he retained a strong emotional attachment to his birthplace, and right to the end of his life, whenever he met a Pinsk Jew, he would say to him: "Please don't call me Georg. Call me Godye" (as his grandfather had been called in Pinsk). He died in 1962 in Jerusalem²², where his daughter, the journalist Lea Ben-Dor, lives.

22. The Letters and Papers of Chaim Weizmann, Volume II, III, Indexed Letters, London 1970, 1972. Professor Gershom Scholem of Jerusalem has informed me that one of Yosef Halpern's daughters was the second wife of Karl Buber, the father of Martin Buber, and another daughter was married to one of the Nathanson family in Lemberg. To complete the biographical details, it should be added that Yosef Halpern also had a daughter, who lived in Germany and married a non-Jew. Thus Yosef Halpern's sons and daughters, the great-grandchildren of Shaul Karliner and grandchildren of Gad-Asher Levin of Pinsk, are representative of the three different "solutions" to the Jewish problem adopted by the Jews of those time.

The Lourié Family

The Lourié "dynasty" was continued in Pinsk by Moshe Lourié (1824—1906), Hayyah's eldest son by her second husband, Aharon Lourié ("Orele Pinsker"). Following the example set by his mother with regard both to the economic development of the town and the support of charitable institutions, he became one of the most important figures in the whole history of Pinsk, the man who developed the town's commerce and later created a modern, Westernized industry in it. As one of the operators of the steamboats plying between Pinsk and southern Russia, he helped (like his mother before him) to turn Pinsk into an inland port and a transport junction between the south and west (through his firm "The Brothers [Moshe and David] Lourié & Co."). When, in the 80s of the 19th century, the construction of a railway running through Pinsk reduced the town's importance as a port and seriously affected its commerce, Moshe Lourié set up a whole variety of industrial plants in the town. In 1865 he built a flour-mill, which was in 1872 powered by a steam-engine imported from Germany, and also a fat-factory, likewise steam-powered. In 1879—80 he founded a large plant for wooden nails, the first of its kind in Russia; and in 1881 a factory to manufacture wooden boxes for the greasing of waggon-wheels. Then, together with two of his children, he constructed a large saw-mill (in 1890) and a factory (in 1898—99) for the production of large plywood-boards for building and furniture. The establishment of all these enterprises created a Jewish industrial proletariat and made Pinsk into a workers' town. With the co-operation of his senior officials, Moshe Lourié saw to it that there was a traditional Jewish atmosphere in his factories, in keeping with the Pinsk Jewish way of life. When taking on new clerks, he gave preference to Talmud Torah students; and he showed his Jewish-consciousness and national pride by naming one of his steamboats "Montefiore". There were in those days very few factories within the Jewish "Pale" that could boast of a Jewish atmosphere and an observance of Jewish customs such as were to be found in Moshe Lourié's enterprises and in the match-factory belonging to his relative, Yosef Halpern (see above). It has rightly been said that these concerns were Jewish in the full sense of the word, and not just Jewish-owned. On the eve of the Sabbath or of a Festival, the



Moshe Lourie
(1824—1906)



Miriam-Leah, wife of Moshe Lourie
(? — 1911)



A medallion commemorating
the diamond wedding anniversary
of Moshe and Miriam-Leah Lourie
(Pinsk 1900)



Moshe Lourie and his family (Pinsk 1900)



Workers of the Lourié factory (1934)



Shmuel'ke der sheimer ("The Watchman")
(1914)



Leopold and Alexander Lourié, as children
(c. 1870)

workers downed tools one hour before the time for the lighting of the candles. Two long siren-blasts from the Lourié factory proclaimed the incoming of the Sabbath — the first as a sign for the closing of the shops, and the second for the lighting of the Sabbath candles. Not only the Jews of Pinsk but also those of the smaller communities round about, on the far side of the lakes and rivers, brought in the Sabbath according to these blasts of the factory siren. On Sabbaths and Festivals the Lourié factory complex was closed and empty. In it, there was a synagogue in which, especially on the Yamim Nora'im [Penitential Days], the manager and the ordinary workers prayed together. There was also a minyan on the Yamim Nora'im in Halpern's match-factory. The workers in the Lourié factory, who started their first shift before dawn, used to make a special work-break for morning prayers in the synagogue, where they had installed an Ark with a *sefer torah*. Those that worked on Saturday night would come to the factory still dressed in their Sabbath clothes, and (so a reliable witness reports), would change into their working clothes only after one of their number had said the *havdalah* prayer marking the end of the Sabbath. At the approach of Pesach, the workers in the plywood-factory used to receive a gift of boards to cover their tables with, so as to make them kosher for the Festival. They were also, in normal years, given free *matsoth*. In the part of the town where the Lourié and Halpern factories stood there was a synagogue, known as the "Monastier-chiener Shulchen", in which almost all the congregants were workers from those factories many of whom spent their free time together there on Sabbaths and Festivals, and also on week-day evenings. Close by this synagogue lived a *dayyan* (Rav Hindin) who served as the workers' religious authority and guide, and to whom they used to appeal for decisions on questions of *halakhah* [religious law], or for settlement of their money disputes, and also for instruction in the *torah*, or a lesson on a page of the *talmud* or a chapter of "Ein Ya'acov" [a collection of talmudic stories].

In the philanthropic field, Moshe Lourié devoted his efforts to the maintenance of the institutions established by his mother: the Talmud Torah, the hospital, and the Karlin Old-Age Home. The

management of these institutions was controlled by members of the Lourié family who, out of respect for their founder, continued the family tradition of support for them right to the end. They also provided for the upkeep of "Hayyeles Schulchen", in which the numerous members of the family used to pray. Together with Hayyah's other children, Moshe Lourié founded the Karlin Gemiluth Hasadim society (1872) and placed at its disposal one of the apartments in his mother's former house, in which the society set up a trade school intended primarily for the poor of the town (1885, 1888). On his golden wedding (1890), Moshe Lourié donated a thousand roubles to the institutions established by his mother; and on his diamond wedding (1900) he gave ten thousand roubles for the building of a new Talmud Torah in Karlin, to replace the old one erected by his mother. In 1903 he shared in the cost of extensive renovations to the Pinsk hospital; and he also provided financial aid for the Somekh Nofelim society which had been founded by his wife, Miriam-Leah, together with their relative, Feigel Levin, (in about 1875) and which was managed by the women of the Lourié family. During the food shortage in Pinsk in 1887, Moshe Lourié and his brother David distributed sixty pud [1 pud = 16.38 kg.] of grain from their mill weekly to the poor of the town; and in 1891 Moshe undertook to grind five thousand pud of rye flour for the same poor free of charge. After the great fire that broke out in Pinsk in 1901, he donated 800 roubles for relief work. On the other hand, after the Kishinev pogrom in 1903, he did not respond generously to an appeal for aid for the victims, perhaps because such a contribution was not in keeping with the rule that he apparently followed of giving preference to the needy of his own town. When the Association of Pinsk Jewish Boatmen was founded in 1890, Moshe Lourié contributed his share of the cost. A contemporary writer reports (1880): "After them [sc. after Hayyah Lourié, Moshe Yitshak and Gad-Asher Levin]... their sons continue... to perform innumerable acts of charity and are even more generous in their provision for the Talmud Torah and the Bikkur Holim [hospital], so that all the people of Karlin look to them for support". An eye-witness (Mordekhai Kerman) describes how the Louriés of his day, and in particular Moshe,

employed an agent to distribute their charities to the needy in the beth midrash during the minhah prayer, in a discreet way unnoticed by any but the recipient. Moshe Lourié was not a member of Hovevei Tsion, nor indeed of the Zionist Organization, and did not contribute to them as he did to charity. Herzl's ideas did not evoke any emotional response in him and his indifference greatly angered the supporters of the strong Zionist movement that arose in the town. However, he was not positively opposed to this movement; indeed, in 1899 a thoroughly Zionist-style Hanukkah party was held in his home, with the participation of the town's leading and most active Zionists (Shimshon Rosenbaum and others). This was no doubt due to the influence of Moshe Lourié's son-in-law, Moshe-Hayyim Eliasberg (one of the oldest Pinsk members of Hovevei Tsion and the town's delegate to the Second and Sixth Zionist Congresses), and also of his two grandsons, Grigory the son of Aharon Lourié and Shaul the son of Idel Lourié (both of them Pinsk delegates to the First Congress). Despite his indifference to Zionism, Moshe Lourié was a member of the "Society for the Spread of *haskalah*"²³.

Times changed. Following the growing unrest among the workers caused by the various socialist movements at the end of the 19th century, the Louriés began to leave Pinsk, as the Levins had (for different reasons) done before them. Typical of the changed attitude to the Lourié family is the following fact, reported by Hayyah Weizmann-Lichtenstein: "W. Lourié and his wife (Beileh) lived for decades in the same house and the same street. She used to go out on to the balcony and watch what was going on in the street and make comments. Year after year she sat there taking the passers-by to task for faults in their appearance and dress, and being listened to with the respect due to such a 'lady'. Came the year 1905, and she was still sitting there on her balcony and making her critical observations. As a young man and woman passed by Mrs. Lourié told the girl off for not having

her hair combed and for talking in a loud voice in the street. Looking her straight in the eye, the girl answered her back: 'That's no business of yours, Beilkeh! Mind your own business, if you don't want to get hurt. Pale and frightened, Mrs. Lourié went into the house and said to her husband. 'Our days are over. There is no more room for us in Pinsk'. And indeed, only a short time later they left Pinsk and settled in Wiesbaden, where they lived the rest of their lives"²⁴.

Moshe Lourié also left Pinsk, the town of his ancestors, towards the end of his life and went to Wiesbaden, where he died in 1906, and his wife died in 1911.

Moshe Lourié's industrial concern was inherited by his two sons, Leopold (Lippa) and Alexander Lourié, who had already enlarged and improved it while their father was still alive, adding a saw-mill and a plywood plant. On his death, they took over not only the running of the concern but also its "Jewishness": the clerks and workers, the atmosphere and customs, remained Jewish as in their father's day. Right to the very end there was, in the main office, a list of the charitable institutions to which contributions were sent every year, in accordance with the family tradition. Heading the list, of course, were those institutions which had been established or particularly supported by the founders of the family.

The spirit prevailing in the Lourié factory was well symbolized by the person of the gatekeeper, a man known as "Shmuelke der Shomer" who worked for both Moshe Lourié and his sons, and who was one of the most popular characters in the works. For several decades he stood on guard at the entrance to this large concern, deciding who should be allowed in and out. A Jew of the old school, with a flowing beard and a typical peaked hasidic cap, a follower of the tsaddik of nearby Libeshei, he used to read the biblical Portion of the Week, together with the targum and Rashi's commentary and hasidic exegesis, while actually on duty, without once making a mistake in the performance of his responsible task. And he was representative of many other conscientious and reliable Jewish workers in the plant.

23. S. M. Rabinowitsch, *op. cit.*, pp. 10, 16, 17. Pinsker Stot Luah, *ibid.*, p. 77. Hamelits, 1891, No. 291, p. 3. Hatsefirah, 1900, No. 76, p. 322. Toysent Yor Pinsk, pp. 73—74, 222, 231. Reports of the Hevrath Mefitsei Haskalah, from the years 1865, 1869, 1872, 1873.

24. H. Weizmann-Lichtenstein, *Be-Tsel Korathenu*, pp. 79—80, Tel Aviv 1953.

In 1889 Leopold Lourié moved to Vienna, after marrying Fanny Landau of Brody, a descendant of the gaon R. Yehezkeel Landau (author of "Noda bi-Yehudah") of Brody and Prague. Even after leaving Pinsk, Leopold continued to visit the town, since he was still responsible for the technical supervision of the factory, and he remained true to the Jewish upbringing that he had received there. "He judged the happenings of the world" — wrote his son, Paul, in the small volume dedicated to his father's memory — "as a Jew, and bequeathed his Jewish outlook to his sons. He was well versed in the Torah and used to study it in his leisure hours... He inherited a tradition of charitable works from his forefathers". Although not an active Zionist, Leopold Lourié made the acquaintance of Dr. Herzl and had several meetings with him. As a result of this, Herzl in 1898 published in his weekly, "Die Welt", an article by Leopold Lourié (under the pseudonym "Karlner") on Pinsk, entitled "Eine jüdische Arbeiterstadt", containing extremely important details on the economic situation of the town at that time. In 1904, when the stream of refugees from the Russian pogroms reached Vienna, Leopold Lourié headed the Rescue Committee set up on their behalf. Through his efforts, many of these refugees found work in Vienna, while many others were enabled to continue on their way, mostly to America.

Leopold Lourié occupies a special place in the family annals. A gifted mechanic, he designed and developed new machines and adapted old ones to new purposes, making improvements in their structure and functioning. The machines developed by him in Pinsk were an economic boon to his fellow-townsmen, and made a name for themselves in Russian, and even in West European, industry. After finishing his studies at the technical institute in Karlsruhe, Germany (in 1881), he went to France and took a further degree in mechanical engineering. Here he saw for the first time a special veneer peeling machine which had just begun to be used for the manufacture of fine plywood-boards. On his journey home, he stopped in Germany to buy a machine of this kind, brought it to Pinsk, and put it into operation in his father's factory for the production of axle-boxes for the greasing of carriage- and cart-wheels. Since the horse-carriage was at that time a very common vehicle in Russia, these boxes were widely sold and the factory became an

important source of livelihood for the Jews of Pinsk. In 1894 Leopold had the idea of making strong, but light, parts for these grease-boxes by gluing a criss-cross of plywood strips on to them with a hydraulic press which was used in his father's oil-factory. He fitted this press with plates of heatable cast-iron, between which the plywood boards were squeezed flat. Then, in 1898, he embarked on the production of large plywood-boards for building and furniture by the same method. Thanks to this invention of Leopold Lourié's, a new industry came into being in Pinsk and spread rapidly all over Russia, wherever there were alder-trees to supply the kind of wood from which plywood could be made by this new method. Since the alder grew in Polesia, around Pinsk, in the Rokitno marshes, and in other parts of the Jewish "Pale", this industry provided a living for thousands of Jews, and particularly for the Jews of Leopold Lourié's own town. A cast-iron plate from one of the first presses constructed by him is still preserved in the Haifa Technion. In addition to this invention, he also developed a technique of using wet glue, in place of the then customary dry glue, for the sticking together of boards of alder-wood. This new discovery led to the creation of a special branch in the plywood industry which was of great benefit to the Jews of Pinsk and its environs. Thus, thanks to these two technical improvements of Leopold Lourié's, one of the local natural resources of Pinsk became a source of livelihood for the Jews in the town. The factories of the "L[eopold] and Al[exander] Lourié" company employed as many as 800 workers, nearly all of them Jewish. Leopold Lourié died in London in 1938, at the age of 79.

After his death (his brother Alexander had died before him in 1924), the factory was managed by his eldest son Paul (or Shemuel, now living in Canada), until it was nationalized by the Bolsheviks after their occupation of Pinsk in 1939. Paul continued the family tradition of making yearly contributions to charitable institutions in the town, as did his youngest brother, Arthur (now in Ireland). Leopold Lourié's second son, Anton (now in the United States) published the will of Hayyah Lourié's father, the "great" Shaul Karlner, in "Yivo Bletter", together with a careful analysis of its historical veracity. This study contains some very important information about Pinsk at the beginning of the 19th century. Anton also wrote

a monograph, "Die Familie Lourié", giving genealogical details of this family from the 14th century onwards, down to the last three generations of its connection with, and work in, Pinsk. The three sons of Leopold Lourié were the last of the "Rothschilds" of Pinsk and Karlin.

Dr. Alexander Lourié (1861—1924), the youngest of Moshe Lourié's eight sons and daughters, was a very well-known figure in Pinsk and the last representative of the "Lourié" tradition there. Most of the members of the family — including Moshe Lourié's brothers, Shemuel and David, and their children — had left Pinsk by the beginning of the 20th century, but Alexander Lourié maintained his connection with the town till his death in 1924. After his brother Leopold moved to Vienna (1889), Alexander still went on living for some time in Pinsk; and even after he himself had made his home in Vienna, he frequently visited Pinsk in connection with the family's industrial affairs. As a child he received both a Jewish and a general education; and when he grew up he continued his studies in Germany, obtaining a doctorate in philosophy at the university of Heidelberg. On his return to Pinsk, he and his brother set up the firm of "The Brothers L. and Al. Lourié". He used to give his workers various gratuities in time of need, but he could also be harsh and unyielding with them. When, in March 1905, a strike broke out in his factory, he called in the police and the Cossacks to load the goods on to the railway waggons; and during this whole period of industrial unrest there was considerable tension between him and his workers, who were members of the "Bund". He was, as already stated, a student of the humanities, and his education had a lasting effect on him. Although very busy with the affairs of his factory, he made time for study, and for several years took lessons in talmud and Jewish philosophy in Vienna from the well-known scholar and rabbi, Dr. Aharon Kaminka. In Pinsk he continued the philanthropic tradition of his forebears. He gave generously, both in his own name and on behalf of his Company, to charitable institutions, especially those established by his father's mother, Hayyah Lourié. After the great fire in Pinsk in 1901 he headed the Rescue Committee, together with his brother Aharon. In 1903 he contributed a thousand roubles to the renovation of the Pinsk hospital. In 1905 he served as "advisor"

in the Pinsk municipality, but gave up this position when the "Association for the Attainment of Full Equality for the Jewish People in Russia" directed such Jewish "advisors" to resign, because they had not been elected by the Jewish community but had been appointed by the Russian authorities. Alexander Lourié proved his loyalty to the Jews of Pinsk during the First World War, when the town was conquered in 1915 by the Germans. Although he could have returned to his family in Vienna, he told his friends that he would not abandon his fellow-townsmen in that hard time of bloodshed and hunger. He thought, and rightly so, that with his social standing, education and knowledge of German, he would be able to ensure that the rights of the Jews of his town were respected by the German conqueror. And indeed, the Germans appointed him chairman of the "Citizens Committee", i.e. mayor of the town, in which position he worked indefatigably to protect the interests of the people of Pinsk. During the food shortage that was felt all over Germany, and particularly in the conquered parts of Russia, he even succeeded in somewhere getting hold of a waggonful of grain for Pesach and was thus able to provide every Jew with a pound of matsah for the Festival. However, it soon became clear to him that the Germans were using the "Citizens' Committee" as a convenient tool to enable them to carry out their plans for exploiting the local population and its property for their own advantage. When he courageously opposed their demands — including an order to hand over the girls of the town as camp prostitutes — he was arrested and marched through the streets of Pinsk, under a guard of German soldiers, to serve a short prison sentence. On another occasion, he was taken by the Germans as a hostage, together with four other of the town's leading citizens. Although the local population saw that the ineffectiveness of the "Citizens' Committee" was not due to any lack of effort on its part, they nevertheless started a whispering campaign against it and its chairman. Disheartened by this state of affairs, Alexander Lourié resigned from his position and left the town in the summer of 1916, returning to his family in Vienna.

Unlike his brother Leopold, Alexander Lourié was opposed to the Zionist movement, a fact that saddened and angered the Zionists of Pinsk,

including Chaim Weizmann²⁵. In the Lourié factory at the beginning of the present century, as in the Halpern match-factory, there was a clear ideological stratification on Jewish matters: the workers were either religiously observant Jews or members of the "Bund" socialist party; the clerks and officials were Zionists of one kind or another; and Alexander Lourié himself represented the philanthropic attitude²⁶. He died in 1924, after having successfully rebuilt his factory after the First World War. His daughter, Paula Strauss, who was born of his marriage with Natalia Wahl of Königsberg, is now living in Canada.

Moshe Lourié's oldest son, Aharon, was one of the leading public figures in Pinsk in the second half of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century. He founded social institutions, was chairman of schools and hospitals and used his good connections with the Russian authorities to help his fellow-townsmen. By nature strong-willed and authoritarian, he was nevertheless a devoted servant of the Jewish community. Although he lived in the aristocratic manner of the *gevir*, he mixed freely with his fellow-Jews, and was easily approachable and ready to listen to any request. Hence he was affectionately known by the ordinary people as "Ore Lourié". He was born in 1842 and given a traditional education by private teachers. He married Beileh, the daughter of the above-mentioned Meir Levin, his father's cousin (see his own letter to Y.L. Gordon, reproduced in full below). In 1860—1868 he was the Pinsk correspondent of the Russian Jewish paper "Tsion" and the Vilna Jewish journal "Hacarmel". In 1851, the poet Y.L. Gordon happened to come to Pinsk and Aharon Lourié had for 2-3 months the good fortune of being his pupil. A friendship sprang up between them which was to last the rest of their lives, as is shown by Gordon's letters to Aharon Lourié from 1862 to 1888²⁷. Some

excerpts from these letters will indicate the affection and respect felt for Aharon Lourié by a poet of the *haskalah* period. On the 20th Teveth, 1862, Gordon writes to him: "...I hasten to let you know that I am the man you are seeking. I stayed twelve years ago in your town and was a frequent visitor in the house of your respected parents. You were taught by me for two or three months. I still remember you as a small, delicate child... I at that time predicted to your respected father that you would grow up to be well educated and intelligent, as indeed you have. I see from your short, well and tastefully written letter... that your heart and soul are filled with wisdom and knowledge. I am also very, very glad to see that you still remember me... for you too are dear to me... and I feel a strong affection for you... Tell me about all that has happened to you since I left all of you... Is all well with your generous-hearted father, the dear and respected R. Moshe, and with your wise and capable mother?... Is your grandmother, Hayyah Lourié, still living? How is your widely-learned uncle, R. Yosef Ettinger [the husband of Gite Ettinger, a step-sister of Moshe Lourié]? And what about your two towns, Pinsk and Karlin — have they advanced towards the light of the *haskalah* or have they fallen back?... Also tell me, please, if the A. Lourié that writes in the Jewish journals is none other than yourself... I can hardly wait for your reply... If you have a photograph of yourself... please send it to me... Ever your affectionate friend, Yalag". And from another letter, written in a similar vein on the 10th Nisan 1863: "...In the year 1850, when I was nineteen, my father, of blessed memory, sent me to Pinsk to claim a sum of money owed him by a man who was a teacher in the school there. In connection with this claim, I was obliged to remain in that town [Pinsk] for several weeks and I bethought myself to earn my keep by private teaching... Thus I came to know you, you and your respected father and mother, and that wonderful woman, your grandmother, and all the other upright and dear members of your family and inhabitants of your town, some of whom I still remember and yearn to see". In yet another letter, dated the 10th Adar, 1864, Gordon writes to Lourié: "...When I read your letter a second time today, I found it full of sound remarks, written with wisdom and intelligence, and testifying to your

25. Ch. Weizmann, *Trial and Error*, p. 40, Jerusalem 1963.

26. S. M. Rabinowitsch, *op. cit.*, p. 10. *Moment*, Volumes I, II, III, Indexed Letters, London 1968, 1970, 1972. See also *ibid*, Vol. I, letters 13, 40, 304, 316 and Vol. III, letter 215.

1911, No. 299, p. 4. *Warsaw. Haint*, 1911, No. 301, p. 3, *Warsaw. Toysent Yor Pinsk*, pp. 116, 179, 184, 187.

27. Published in *Iggeroth Yehudah-Leib Gordon*, 1894.

wide knowledge and balanced thought. The situation in your towns [Pinsk and Karlin] with regard to the *haskalah* movement is the same as that in most of the towns in our country where our brethren reside: the great mass of the people is still walking in darkness... but... the sun's rays can be seen reaching out to these rejecters of the light... Your style is good and elegant, and you have a ready writer's pen... In your letter... there were foreign words... as I have also found in your articles in 'Carmel'. Train yourself to speak Hebrew, so that you should have no need of non-Hebrew words".

On the 15th Iyyar, 1868, Gordon writes to tell Lourié about his satirical story describing the *tsaddik* R. Aharon the Second and the hasidic milieu that he created around himself, the quarrel between the Karlin hasidim and the Lourié family who lived close to the rebbe's "court", and the expulsion of R. Aharon from Karlin. "...I want you to know that, among the many stories that I have ready in manuscript, there is one called 'Aharith Simhah Tugah' ['Joy Ends in Sorrow'] ... about the life of the hasidic sect. This story is a tribute... to that great Jewish lady, your grandmother, and to your respected father. Of course, I have been careful to change their names completely, but all who know them will recognize them in my characters, for they are a seed blessed by God Since I know you, my friends, to be a man of understanding, full of the spirit of divine wisdom, I beg you to let me know your opinion of my new poems... You alone do I know of all ... the leading citizens of your towns Pinsk and Karlin Please be so good as to hand the book to Mr. Shatskes, the author of 'Ha-Mafteah' [a key to the rabbinical writings, one of the pioneering works of the *haskalah* literature, written by a native of Karlin]...". On the publication of a new book by Gordon, the author sent a copy of it to Lourié with the following letter (1868): "... For about two weeks I have been busy distributing copies of my new book... but till now I have not sent one to your town... Apart from yourself I have no one on whom I can rely in your town". In another letter written on the day after Yom Kippur, 1868, Gordon gives some details about the business affairs of Aharon Lourié's father and uncle: "... Tell me, my very dear friend, what

kind of business is carried on by your firm 'The Brothers [Moshe and David] Lourié & Co.'. I have heard that you have a steamboat. Where does it sail to? And what goods does it carry? What is your line of business? Do you deal in timber and grain, as your family has done for generations? Or are you building railway lines?". When his book "*Olam ke-Minhago*" ["Everything As Usual"] appeared, Gordon wrote to Lourié (on the first of the intermediate days of Pesach, 1873): "I am sending you all, you and your father and grandmother, one... copy of the second story from my book '*Olam ke-Minhago*', which has just been published. I know that your grandmother understands Hebrew fairly well, and therefore I could not refrain from sending her a special copy of the book, as a token of my gratitude for the kindness that she showed me many years ago. When you read my book, you will easily recognize the real identity of the heroes and villains hinted at by my descriptions. But you must keep this to yourselves and behave as if you did not know, so that I should not be accused of wickedness... Also tell me how the reading of the story affects the members of your household...". On the 22nd Av, 1874, Gordon writes to Lourié about the sale of certain books and about the Hebrew newspaper "*Hatsefirah*": "... You will have seen from the papers that the committee is prepared to publish the Five Books of Moses in a new Russian translation for our Jewish youth and that it is trying to get people to covenant to buy this book... For it has been firmly decided not to publish the *tora*h until we have collected a thousand paid-up covenants in your town, for which purpose you will find enclosed... a printed form for recording the names of the people who sign a covenant... I have also sent one of these forms to the rabbi of your holy congregation, R. Rosenberg [the rabbi appointed by the Russian authorities]... Furthermore, R. Hayyim Selig Slonimski has begun republishing '*Hatsefirah*' and has made me its general agent throughout Russia. Please be so good, therefore, as to recommend to me a trustworthy man in your town whom can I employ as my agent, on a business basis... Always your sincere friend, Yalag". On August 13th 1876, Gordon wrote to Lourié from Marienbad: "... I was very happy to meet your dear mother again after twenty-five years... I send you my

greetings from far away... We shall see each other again in Petersburg... Don't forget me on your arrival there... Your brother A[lexander] told me last night that you had enquired after me in your letter to your mother... I think I told you at the time that my daughter has become engaged to a young lawyer... I therefore request you to provide this future son-in-law of mine with law-suits, either your own or others', for he is a quick and able lawyer...". On Nov. 1st 1876, Gordon wrote to Lourié about an article which he had received from him: "...Your letter... with the enclosed article... did not reach me until today, and that is why I have not answered it... Now I have also received your second letter with... 12 roubles... If only we had a million members like you!... Next week you will receive a small tribute from me — the poem that I have written... Give my best regards to your respected mother, whom I was delighted to meet again after more than twenty years. Your friend, Yalag".

In 1888, Aharon Lourié published a notice in "Hamelits" and "Voshod" announcing that he required a teacher for the trade school which he had opened in Pinsk, and requesting applicants to send details of their education and qualifications to Gordon's address in Petersburg. This shows how close the relations between the two men were. On the 12th Av, 1888, Gordon wrote to Lourié about the candidates who were applying for the position: "Following on the notice that you placed in 'Voshod' and 'Hamelits', I am receiving a large number of applications, some in person and some by letter from remote places, from carpenters and iron-smiths who want to work in your school... You have not yet told me the terms... what the teacher's salary will be... So... let me have all the details... so that I should know what replies to give to the applicants' questions... Always your affectionate and sincere friend, Yalag".

Aharon Lourié's feeling for Y.L. Gordon is illustrated in the following two letters²⁸, which also contain details of the condition of Pinsk Jewry at the time and of Lourié's views on educational and cultural questions: "19th Iyyar 1863

First of all, I will finish what I started to write in my last letter.

28. Made available to me by Dr. M. Nadav of the University Library, Jerusalem.

At the end of the week I returned home and found Perl [the Pinsk teacher, Marcus Perl] once again doing the work that I love, without any proper equipment for this task. I realized that I was woefully ignorant (for apart from the Holy Tongue, at which I had worked without any teacher, I had no clear knowledge of any other language, still less of any of the other necessary subjects)... I said to my father: Please be so good as to find me someone to teach me...

But there was no second Perl in our town. In the government Hebrew School... there were at that time two charlatans of teachers... completely ignorant *mela m medim*. So my father decided to take the unprecedented step of finding me an instructor from among the teachers of the town's high school and was divinely guided to pick on the school's inspector, Ovtchinikov²⁹... a man who knew various languages and was versed in all the sciences, and who also had the advantage of having perfected his instruction by long practice, for he had been teaching for over twenty years. He had already taught many pupils by his new method, without any of the wearisome books of dry rules and theorems... He knew how to impart to his pupils all the rigorous laws of every subject in such a direct, easy, effective, and pleasant way that they were never again forgotten. And in addition to all these qualities, he was a man of great integrity and culture, one who loved and respected his fellow-creatures regardless of their nationality. At that time, my father had many *shadkhanim* [marriage-brokers] knocking at his door, for they could not bear to see a youth of sixteen still single. Before long, I heard myself being called '*hathan*' [bridegroom]: my parents had betrothed me to a cultured young lady, Shulamith, the daughter of R. Meir Levin (of our town). This R. Meir is an educated and wise man, who can vie with the greatest scholars in the land in knowledge of the *torah*, and who at the same time is a seeker of general enlightenment. My parents wisely delayed the day of my marriage for two years, till I reached the age of 18. During this period (and afterwards too), I continued my studies with my teacher, the upright and good inspector. Apart from teaching me language and

29. See paper *Tsion*, 1863 (?), No. 34, Pinsk Letters. This article was not before my eyes.

literature, and some other necessary knowledge, he constantly strove to widen my understanding and to show me what attitude a human being should adopt to the world around him, to everything that is done under the sun.

This is how the ten years passed, from the time you left us to the happy day of my marriage (the 11th Elul, 1859). During all this period, most of my time was devoted to the talmud, and two or three hours a day to secular studies. Of all my teachers of talmud the only one that had any real understanding of his task was a certain old man named R. Moshe-Leib, who taught me in my fifteenth and sixteenth years... My teachers never taught me the Bible at all, because they thought this study a waste of time, or because they considered that the words of the prophets were an encouragement to sinners. Alas! When will the Jewish people become truly wise?

I have now been four years in the house of the rav and gaon, my father-in-law, and I have still one more year — God willing — to live a life of peace and quiet in his house. God has blessed me with two lovely boys. May it be granted me to educate them in the torah, in Jewish observance, and in worldly knowledge!

By God's grace, I am permanently resident in the town where my dear parents live. I am no longer their only child, for I have four brothers, besides the three sisters who had already passed away when you were staying here. All is well with us, as with my grandmother, Hayyah (long may she live!).

It is now more than two years since I started to engage in the business of bringing animal fat from the district of Yekaterinoslav by ship to Pinsk. The business has declined in this last year, on account of the railway between Petersburg and Warsaw, but there is good hope of its playing an important part in Pinsk's commerce... if the Lithuanian line is built between Pinsk and Bialystok, the junction for the Warsaw line which connects... also with foreign lands.

Till now I have kept up my Jewish and secular studies; and my reading of German, French, and particularly Russian and Hebrew books has been my daily recreation. I also sometimes devote time... to writing articles in... Hebrew and Russian for journals written in these languages. Usually I sign

them with my own name, A. Lourié, but occasionally I employ various pseudonyms. I am 'Abram the Hebrew' who was attacked by many people for his 'philological remarks' in 'Hamaggid', till I answered them in 'A Reply to My Critics'.

I shall postpone my reply to your question about the state of the *haskalah* movement in Pinsk in these days to another letter.

I received your last letter and was glad to see in it that you know how to devote a large part of these letters to your wise comments.

You try to convince me that there is no point in my hearing the story of your life. But I think differently, since I learn many things by reading between the lines, and above all this: that there was a man whose teachers did not take proper pains with him and whose education was left to unqualified *melammedim* with no knowledge of pedagogy — and who nevertheless eventually became a very wise and learned man, a shining intellectual example to his brethren, greatly admired for his wisdom... This is a lesson to me, and one that I have learnt!

Please send me ten copies of your book 'Mishlei Yehudah' for me to distribute in my town. You should know that two years ago I also bought ten copies of this book in Vilna and distributed them among my acquaintances, so that I cannot now promise you a good price for the ten new copies. If you fix a low price, I shall do my best for you...

The best way to send the books is through R. Yitshak Mikhalovski in Vilna. If you write to him that these books are for me, he will send them to me with one of the consignments of books that he sends to my town.

Also, please let me have some copies of 'Ahavath David', if you agree to a price of 30 kopek, for copies of the book are plentiful in our town.

Your affectionate and respectful friend,
A. Lourié

P.S. The R. Hayyim Lourié about whom you ask in your letter is the son-in-law of R. Henekh Eisenstadt of Minsk and is at present the owner of a shop [?] in partnership with Eisenstadt's son, the name of their firm being 'Eisenstadt and Lourié' (in Minsk).

In the second letter to Gordon, Lourié writes as follows:

"Sunday, January 29th, Pinsk

My dear friend,

I hasten to reply to your letter of the 20th which I received yesterday, to be sure of this reaching you in Telsh.

I see from your letter that you sent me a small volume of 'Meshalim' ['Fables'] which I never received. Please send me another one on your return.

Please find enclosed 75 kopek, the price of 6 copies of your book — 5 of 'Mishlei Yehudah, and one of 'Olam ke-Minhago, Pt. I'.

When the second part of your 'Olam' appears, be sure to send it to me.

You have presumably seen the book 'Milhemeth Soferim' (by Müller), which my friends thought would be still-born... This work is characteristic of a certain set of Russian Jews, the yeshivah students who, having looked through some books in Hebrew on secular subjects, think that they have mastered the whole of secular wisdom and make a noisy display of their supposed knowledge, like a few coins rattling in an empty jar I was particularly amused by the author's statement that the truth of the *akedah* [binding of Isaac] was proved by the words occurring in the *shemoneh esreh* prayer for the New Year: 'Thou wilt remember the binding of Isaac for his seed'. Irrefutable proof indeed'.

Your affectionate and respectful friend,
A. Lourié"

In 1862 Aharon Lourié drew up a petition on behalf of the Pinsk merchants to the Minsk provincial governor "concerning the railway from Pinsk to Bialystok". In his above-quoted letter of the 19th Iyyar 1863 to Y.L. Gordon, Lourié remarks that he wrote the petition in Russian, and then himself translated it into Hebrew for publication in "Hacarmel" (1863, Vol. 30, pp. 241—244). Ten of the twelve leading merchants of the town who signed the petition were either members of the Levin and Lourié families or related to them by marriage, a fact which testifies to the great impor-

tance of these families in the commercial life of Pinsk. Here is the list of the signatories of the petition:

"Pinsk, November 8th, 1862

Moshe [Yitshak] Levin, merchant of the second guild

Hayyah Lourié, merchant of the second guild

Meir, the son of R. Moshe [Yitshak] Levin, merchant of the second guild

Moshe Lourié, merchant's son

Shelomo [son of Moshe Yitshak] Levin, merchant's son

Yosef Ettinger [husband of Gite née Lourié], merchant

Nehemyah Kolodny, merchant

Wolf Naidich, merchant

Shabbethai Simhovich, merchant's son

[Yitshak] Isaac, the son of R. Moshe Eliasberg [son-in-law of Wolf Levin, the son of Shaul Karliner], merchant's son

Aharon, the son of R. Moshe Lourié, merchant's son".

Nehemyah Kolodny and Wolf Naidich were distinguished citizens of the town, and also among the leaders of the Karlin hasidim³⁰.

Aharon Lourié established four public institutions in Pinsk. In 1880 he founded the Mutual Credit Society and served as chairman of its control committee until 1905. The president of the board of governors of this fund was Aharon Lourié's son, Grigory, and its auditor was for some time the well-known talmudic scholar R. Barukh Epstein. In 1885 Aharon Lourié set up a trade school for boys, which he enlarged and improved in 1888. He presided over and saw to the proper upkeep of this institution, the primary aim of which was to teach Jewish youth ship-repairing. In 1900, together with the officially appointed rabbi Semezhovski, he founded the Jewish Charitable Society. And in 1901, he established the *Halvaah ve-Hisakhon* [Loan and Saving] bank for the benefit of the middle classes and the small merchant, taking care to ensure that it was run on sound economic

30. *Hatsefirah*, 1877, No. 49, p. 388.

principles. He was also president of the governing body of the Karlin hospital; and, together with Gite Ettinger, his father's step-sister, he ran the Beth Gemiluth Hasadim [Loan Society] set up with the assistance of the Lourié family and other benefactors in 1872. From 1884 onwards, Aharon Lourié was one of the principals of the Karlin Talmud Torah school that had been built by Hayyah Lourié. When, in 1902, new premises were erected for this school, thanks to a donation from his father, Moshe Lourié, Aharon supervised the actual building operations. The members of the Lourié-Halpern-Eliasberg families at all times gave active support to the two Talmud Torah schools, the one in Karlin and the other in Pinsk — financially, academically (syllabus, teaching methods, choice of teachers), and administratively (as principals). Those that particularly devoted themselves to this work were, besides Aharon Lourié, his brother Isidore, his son Leopold, and his brother-in-law Moshe-Hayyim Eliasberg; Gite Ettinger (née Lourié), her husband Yosef Ettinger and their son Mikhal; Shabbethai Simhovich and Yonah Simhovich (apparently Shabbethai's son), the son-in-law of David Lourié³¹. Like his father, Aharon Lourié was a member of the "Society for the Promotion of the Enlightenment Among the Jews in Russia". The two of them were the first members of the "Society" in Pinsk³²; and Aharon Lourié was later for many years the only member in the town³³. It was characteristic of Pinsk Jewry that only members of the Lourié family joined the "Society": Aharon Lourié's brother, Alexander; his son, Grigory; and his brother-in-law, Moshe-Hayyim Eliasberg³⁴. Aharon Lourié was instrumental in bringing about the appointment of Beilin as the official rabbi of Pinsk; and when the local priest paid a visit to Beilin, Lourié succeeded in purchasing from the church a plot of land for the extension of the Karlin Jewish cemetery. For 25 years Aharon Lourié served as a Russian-appointed "advisor" on the Pinsk municipal council.

31. Hamelits, 1863, No. 20, p. 312, Idem, 1887, No. 114, p. 1203. Hatsefirah, 1876, No. 15, p. 113. Hamaggid, 1880, No. 35, p. 300 and No. 47, p. 400. S. M. Rabinowitsch, *op. cit.*, pp. 11, 16.

32. Reports of the Society for the years 1865—1873.

33. Reports for the years 1888—1893.

34. Reports for 1894, 1895.

Despite his wide education and homely character³⁵, Aharon Lourié fought against changes in the cultural and political life of his community similar to those that he himself introduced in the economic sphere. He was opposed to Zionism, to the socialist movement, to the democratization of public institutions, and to reforms in Jewish education, even though he himself sent two of his sons to learn in the government "Realschule" in Pinsk. However, the realities of contemporary Jewish life proved too strong for the community's most powerful personality in his struggle to resist the new ideas of his time.

In the election of representatives to the First Duma (Parliament) in Russia the list of candidates headed by Aharon Lourié was defeated by the Zionist list. At a time when there was a threat of a pogrom in Pinsk, emissaries from the Jewish socialist party came to Lourié and asked him for a contribution to the Jewish self-defence organization. After first refusing and even insulting them, he eventually agreed to contribute 500 roubles. It was at this time that, so the report goes, he was attacked and beaten on his way home from the synagogue on the first day of Rosh Hashanah, and a primitive scare-bomb exploded in his house. Significant of the change in the times was Aharon Lourié's having to relinquish the chairmanship of the Halvaah ve-Hisakhon bank, which he had founded and developed, in favour of the Zionist candidate for the position, Pinhas Mandelbaum; and Aharon Lourié's successor as head of the Mutual Credit Society bank, which he had also founded and over which he had presided for more than twenty-five years, was the Zionist, Moshe Soloveichik. A bitter conflict broke out between Lourié and the Zionists in 1900, following on the order issued by the provincial governor for the election of a president of the Pinsk Talmud Torah school. The Zionists wanted to take advantage of the election to gain control of this important institution, in order to educate the younger generation in Zionism. Lourié, together with certain orthodox Jews, strongly opposed the Zionists, and in the struggle that followed his son, Grigory, defied his authority. The Zionists succeeded in getting changes introduced into the syllabus of

35. A. Mukdoni, *Meine Begegnungen*, Buenos Aires 1949.

the school. Together with Yosef Halpern and a group of orthodox Jews, Lourié sought to prevent the appointment of the rav R. Tsevi Valk as the Pinsk Av Beth-Din, in place of the deceased R. Elazar-Moshe Hurwitz. Lourié wanted the rav R. David Friedman, the Karlin Av Beth-Din and son-in-law of Shemaryahu Lourié of Mohilev, to become the Av Beth-Din of both communities. But most of the Jews of Pinsk were opposed to this arrangement, and he was obliged to yield to their wishes.

Unlike his father, Aharon Lourié had nothing to do with industry. He was a contractor for the supply of railway-sleepers in Central Asia, and of iron and bricks for the construction of bridges and railway-stations. He was also a partner in a timber concern and an agent of the "Northern Insurance Company". He died in the town of Bobruisk, in the province of Minsk, and was buried in the Karlin Jewish cemetery (1910). On the way from the railway-station to the cemetery, the funeral procession stopped outside the institutions with which he had been actively associated in his lifetime, while pupils of the Karlin Talmud Torah school and the choir of the Pinsk great synagogue recited passages from the Psalms. Representatives of the societies that he had founded or directed accompanied him to his last resting-place³⁶.

A particularly remarkable member of the Lourié family was a man with all the virtues and faults of the unworldly idealist. This was Grigory (Gavriel), the eldest son of Aharon Lourié, whose public activities — mainly in the Zionist cause — extended beyond the confines of his native town throughout the "Pale" of Jewish settlement in Russia, and even further afield. In fact, this Grigory deserves a monograph all to himself. His life and work in Pinsk belong to the early days of Herzl's Zionist movement. Born in Pinsk in 1861, he was sent as a youth by his father to Germany to attend the "Gymnasium" [high school] in Frankfurt-on-Main. After this, he went to Karlsruhe to study at the Polytechnic Institute there. But before he had completed his course of studies in Chemistry, he went on to France and spent two years in Paris. On his return to Pinsk, he set up a large oil-processing mill (1888), built a small chemical factory

in which the student Chaim Weizmann worked for a year (1895—6) as a chemist, and developed a chalk-manufacturing enterprise. His personality is perhaps best revealed in his revolutionary — in terms of contemporary social conditions and ideas — act of introducing an eight-hour working day in his enterprises, a humane and progressive step that was completely unrealistic in terms of the economic viability of industrial concerns in those days. This experiment is known to have been one of the first, perhaps actually the very first, of its kind in all Europe. In accordance with this new work schedule, his oil-mill was the first industrial concern in which there were three shifts of workers in a 24-hour day. Grigory Lourié founded a bank in Pinsk, and, together with his brother Shemuel, opened banks in Homel and in the small towns of Klintsi, Pochep, and Zhlobin. Like all the other Louriés, he took an active interest in educational and cultural institutions; only in place of the Talmud Torah established and maintained by earlier generations of his family, the recipients of his benefactions were now the "progressive heder", the first Jewish club, the library and reading-room. He was also chairman of the governing board of the Mutual Credit Society, an institution of great economic and social importance which had been founded by his father, Aharon Lourié, in 1880. It was this fund that played a major part in putting an end to the extortionate terms for loans which were still customary at that time in Pinsk: money was lent against the security of valuables and at a high rate of interest, with repayment of both interest and capital having to be made weekly. Grigory Lourié was not content with caring for the cultural welfare of his fellow-townsmen, but also aspired to improve their economic condition. However, the actual director of this Credit Society was presumably the experienced man of commerce, Aharon Lourié, and not his son Grigory, who was not a businessman at all.

Throughout the period of the Hibbath Tsion movement, Grigory Lourié was one of its loyal supporters. His advice was sought, for example, on the question of the "progressive heder" which was opened in Pinsk in 1895; and Herzl's biographer (A. Bein) mentions him as one of the most important members of Hovevei Tsion. When the Zionist movement came into

36. Pinski Listok, 1910, No. 4, p. 2.

being, Grigory was one of its active leaders in Pinsk. He was sent as one of the Pinsk delegates to the First Congress, and on his return to Pinsk, he was responsible for the opening of a Zionist club which became the centre of the Zionist activity in the town. He was also one of the chief speakers at the Zionist meetings held in the well-known synagogue "Mokhes Shulchen". And he was one of the two Pinsk delegates chosen to take part in the Zionist consultation held in Bialystok about three months after the First Congress, to discuss the implementation of the resolutions passed at the Congress and the whole programme of Zionist work in Russia. He particularly devoted himself to the establishment and development of the Colonial Bank (for Jewish settlement), without of course deriving any personal advantage from the whole scheme. The shares of the Bank began to be issued in Pinsk, as in other Russian towns, even before the Second Congress, on the announcement by the Bank's temporary committee of a preliminary subscription.

On the eve of the Second Zionist Congress, the Russian Zionist delegates to that Congress, including those from Pinsk, met to discuss the setting up of a "bank for Jewish settlement in Palestine". Since Grigory Lourié was one of the Pinsk delegates to the Second Congress, as well as the First, he must have been present at this meeting, especially in view of the subject discussed. After the meeting, he went on to Cologne where a conference was held on the problems of setting up the Colonial Bank. We find his signature among those of the participants in this conference, at which it was decided to propose the establishment of the Bank to the Second Congress. Another signature was that of his uncle, Moshe-Hayyim Eliasberg, who was a Pinsk delegate to the Second and Sixth Congresses³⁷.

At the Second Congress, Grigory Lourié took part in the drawing up of the resolution calling for the immediate establishment of the Bank. He was also one of the nine members of the Bank Committee elected at this Congress. The year between the Second and the Third Congress was a year of intensive activity on Lourié's part, both in Pinsk itself, which became the centre for the distribution of the Bank's shares throughout Russia, and London

and Vienna, where he took part in consultations and meetings in connection with the Bank. During this period, he was Herzl's advisor on all matters concerning the Bank in Russia. On the eve of the Third Congress, Herzl pressed Lourié to accept the post of the Bank's chairman in London. Herzl stressed that "the appointment of Lourié will make a good impression in Russia", and he further urged "the Russian leaders that they too should call on him to make this sacrifice for the cause".

When, immediately after the Second Congress, the Zionist Executive Committee assigned Grigory Lourié the task of obtaining subscriptions for the shares of the Colonial Bank, Pinsk (as already remarked) became the centre of the propaganda drive for the sale of these shares. So much so, that the leaders of the Zionist movement used to come to Pinsk from Warsaw and Vilna in connection with the organization of the Bank's activities; and enquiries about the Bank poured into Pinsk from the large and small towns within the "Pale", and even from outside it³⁸.

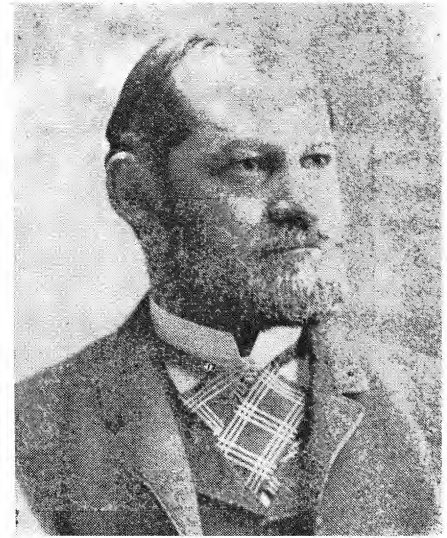
Lourié established and maintained contact between Pinsk and London, to such good effect that the Jewish public associated the affairs of the Bank with the small Russian town rather than the English metropolis. Since the Bank's work was illegal, the shares were not sent from London to Pinsk by post, but carried across the Russian border in a parcel by a special emissary. The addresses that reached Pinsk from Warsaw and London were written, in great secrecy, on batches of the Bank's prospectuses, which were then placed in sacks, and taken at night to the post-office and handed for despatch to a clerk who was well paid for his collaboration. All these clandestine activities were directed by Grigory Lourié. At the same time, printed copies appeared of the "Programme for a National Bank", translated from German into Hebrew by Efraim-Dov Lifshits, a native of Pinsk and one of the town's leading Zionists. There is no doubt that it was Grigory Lourié that encouraged his fellow-townsmen and friend, who was a gifted publicist, to translate the programme, so that it could be widely distributed for propaganda purposes. To the same end, Lourié also wanted to publish the regulations of the Colonial Bank in Russian, but was forbidden to do so by

37. H. H. Bodenheimer, *Be-Reshith ha-Tenuah*, Jerusalem 1965.

38. Y. Apel, *Betokh Reshith ha-Tehiyah*, pp. 485—486, Tel Aviv 1936.



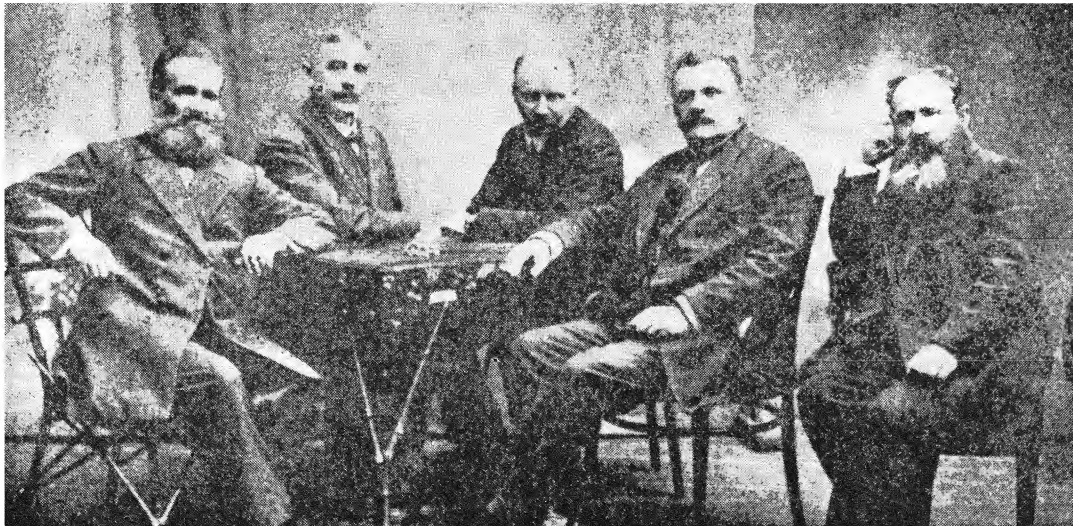
Leopold (Lippa), son of Moshe Lourié
(1859—1938)



Aharon, son of Moshe Lourié
(1842—1910)



Alexander Lourié under arrest during the
German occupation of Pinsk (1916)



Hostages of the Pinsk population during the German occupation (1916)
second from the right Dr. Alexander Lourié



Aharon, the son of Moshe
Lourié, and his family



КОМИТЕТЪ ПО УЧРЕЖДЕНІЮ
Еврейскаго Колоніальнаго Банка
въ Іерусалѣмѣ.

Пинск, 7. Маі 1899 г.
Гр. Л. Ф. Герцл
въ Пинск. Пинск. Кол. Банк.
№ 130.

Милостивый Государь
Нѣhochщенъ Лоръ Герцл!

Ich dachte heute nach London; Alackad.
Grigori Lourie' :-

Ich erhalte heute die Anfrage, ob es schon
aus nothwendig ist die Unterschrift des russischen
Notars auf der Vollmacht. Keresch-Paster vom
englischen Consul in Russland kigürkigen zu lassen
Bitte hinter gelb. Aufklärung fr. Nacht.

Herr Ingen. Wisschokin in Ekaterinostan
drückt mir heute folgendes: "Bitte Aufrechtha-
tung Redaction Basel: Orient insbesondere Tieren
Palästina; streicht: befasst sich mit Colonie- und
Industrie-Prüfung in allen Betrieben, unmöglich
Auszeichnung Hauptbeschluss Basel. Andernfalls ent-
vollständig meine Beteiligung." Hierauf dachte
ich ihm! Vergebens kann ich Sie sich beset aufma-
sam Plakat, Prospekt werden sich Wichtigkeit über-
gen." Und schreibe ich an Herrn Wisschokin noch.

HV 130

HV 130

The letter of Grigori
Lourié to Dr. Herzl
concerning the setting
up of the Colonial Bank
(Pinsk 1899)

the government censor. Thereupon, his fellow-townsmen Yehudah-Leib Berger, the great Zionist who had been the other Pinsk delegate to the First and Second Congresses, travelled from Pinsk to Vilna to try to find some way of getting the censor's prohibition revoked, a mission in which he was eventually successful. This journey to obtain permission for the publication of the Colonial Bank regulations was also undoubtedly undertaken at Lourié's instigation³⁹.

Lourié's work in setting up the Bank raised him to a leading position in the Zionist Organization. The news of Herzl's meeting with the Kaiser Wilhelm II in Constantinople (on Oct. 13th 1898) was sent to him in Pinsk, and it was he that passed it on to other towns. Even after he had ceased to be an active member of the World Zionist Organization, he was consulted by Chaim Weizmann — in 1902, 1903 — from Geneva about the state of the Zionist movement and asked to assist in the establishment of a Hebrew University in Palestine.

As a member of the Colonial Bank committee elected at the time of the Second Congress, Grigory Lourié played a particularly active role in the setting up of this important institution. During *Hanukkah* 1898 he took part in the committee's meetings in London, after the formal procedures for the foundation of the Bank had been completed and the regulations drawn up. He also appeared, together with Wolfson and Jacobus Kan from the Hague, at a large rally of members of the *Benei Tsion* association. Three weeks later, at a meeting of the inner executive committee held in Vienna (on Jan. 1st 1899), he signed an undertaking, together with Herzl, Wolfson, Kan and others, to pay two hundred pounds to cover the cost of setting up the Bank. At the meetings of the full executive committee, which were held in Vienna on Jan. 26-28, 1899, Lourié, together with Wolfson and Heiman from London, submitted a report on the Bank's regulations and on the work that had been done in preparation for the registration of the Bank and the sale of its shares. After this, Lourié made a journey to London to attend to the arrangements in connection with the Bank. Herzl addressed him, in his letters, as "Highly

respected Director", and placed the pages of the Zionist press at his disposal. In the days preceding the registration of the Colonial Bank in London, Herzl sent a constant stream of telegrams and letters from Vienna to the office of the Bank, demanding that prospectuses and other material about the Bank be sent in particular to Grigory Lourié in Pinsk. In one of his letters to Wolfson (Mar. 11th 1899), Herzl wrote: "Attention must be paid to the enclosed letter from Lourié. Russia is what matters most. Don't leave him [Lourié] without help in his difficulties...". While David Wolfson, aided by Kan, was furthering the interests of the Colonial Bank in Western Europe, Grigory Lourié was encountering numerous difficulties in the same task in Russia. Nevertheless, Herzl was able to write (on May 27th 1899): "According to information received... the necessary minimum of [bought] shares (250,000) is at last assured for the Colonial Bank. Of this total Lourié is responsible for 175,000". Lists were now published giving the names of the banks throughout Russia at which shares of the Colonial Bank could be purchased. In Pinsk, the four banks chosen — no doubt by Grigory Lourié — for this purpose were the following: Grigory Lourié's own bank, the Mutual Credit Society bank (of which Grigory was chairman), the bank of Idel and Sam. D. Lourié, (two of Grigory's relatives) and the local branch of the Minsk Commercial Bank. In the first years of the Colonial Bank's existence, 2150 shares were sold in Pinsk. Subscriptions and payments for shares were likewise received in the banks of G. (Grigory) and S. (Shemuel, Grigory's brother) Lourié in Homel, Klitsi, Pochep, and Zhlobin. Herzl was highly appreciative of Lourié's work in those difficult days, as can be seen from his letter of May 16th 1899 to Jacobus Kan and his telegram of June 8th 1899 to Wolfson.

In the meantime, Lourié was encountering increasing difficulties in Russia: the Finance Minister, Witte, instructed the censor to forbid the distribution of all material printed by the Colonial Bank. When Herzl decided that it was necessary "to find... an industrious chairman for the Bank" (Sept. 17th 1898), his choice fell on Grigory Lourié. Lourié's reply, as reported by Herzl to Wolfson, is characteristic of the man and of the way in which he worked for the realization of his ideals. Herzl writes as follows (July 6th 1899): "...On Kan's advice... I yesterday sent Lourié a telegram,

39. A. A. Feinstein, *Megillath Puranuyoth*, p. 9, Tel Aviv 1929. N. M. Lifshits, *Di Tsionistishe Bevegung in Pinsk*, Pinsker Stot Luah, p. 67, Vilna 1903/4.

offering him the position of chairman at an annual salary of a thousand pounds. He replied that he was reluctant to accept, for fear of doubts being cast on his financial integrity". And again, on the same day, in a letter to Kan: "...From Lourié I have received the following telegram in reply to my offer of the chairmanship at an annual salary of 1000 pounds: 'I am afraid that my acceptance might disappoint many Zionists who covenanted to buy Colonial Bank shares because of my devoted work for which I received no remuneration; but I shall consider the matter, nevertheless'".

In a second letter to Kan, on July 12th 1899, Herzl writes: "I am doing all I can to bring Lourié to London. The executive committee will officially offer him the chairmanship. In addition, I shall also ask the Russian Zionist leaders to urge him to make this sacrifice for the cause. In this way we shall make completely sure of him. Your proposal that Lourié should at first be appointed 'director' (i.e. should have a vote on the board) seems a good one to me... Lourié's appointment will make a good impression in Russia...". At the Third Congress Lourié was again elected as one of the directors of the Colonial Bank, but was not at that time rich enough to join the other Russian directors in personally helping to finance Herzl's plans in Turkey. The seven directors of the Bank elected at this Congress set up a sub-committee consisting of two of their own members — Kan and Lourié. Herzl's letters to Wolfson after the Third Congress (written on Sept. 18th 1899 and Sept. 30th 1899) show that Herzl had not abandoned the idea of making Lourié chairman of the Bank, with a view to improving its condition. Herzl writes: "Is Lourié in London?... Lourié will organize the Bank in London", and he goes on to request Wolfson to see that Lourié is assigned this task. The shares of the Colonial Bank were issued (Mar. 23rd 1900) over Lourié's signature. However, as a result of being jointly run by Kan from the Hague and by Lourié from Pinsk, in the absence of a chairman with overriding powers in London, the Bank did not develop as it should have done. This led to differences of opinion between Herzl, on the one hand, and Kan and Lourié, supported by Wolfson and Bodenheimer, on the other. Echoes of this disagreement can be found in Herzl's diary and letters, in the minutes of the meetings of the Zionist Executive Committee and

of the Bank's board of governors, in Zionist literature, and in Lourié's letters (now in the central Zionist archives in Jerusalem). On May 8th 1900 Lourié sent a letter of resignation from Pinsk to the Bank's directors and board of governors. Despite the severe blow dealt to his own pride, Lourié's only thought was for the interests of the Bank, and with his characteristic modesty he wrote to those in charge of it as follows: "...My leaving the Colonial Bank is a loss of no great importance which can easily be made good. But Mr. Kan's expert services to the Bank are irreplaceable, and it is therefore my duty to advise you to telephone to Mr. Kan and insist on his withdrawing his resignation. I leave the Colonial Bank with an easy mind, since I know that, as long as Mr. Loewe is the Bank's secretary and Mr. Lewis its lawyer, they are sufficient insurance against misuse of the Bank's funds...".

Lourié's recognition of Kan's pre-eminence as an expert in banking matters shows that, even at the moment of his resignation, his chief concern was for the future of the Colonial Bank which he had done so much to bring into being. Down to the time of the Fourth Congress (August 1900) he remained loosely connected with it and was actually co-opted on to the Bank's economic committee. However, after the Fourth Congress he ceased to take a leading, active part in the Bank's affairs, though he was again elected to its committee at the Fifth Zionist Congress, which he attended as a delegate from Pinsk. In contrast to his fellow-townsmen and fellow-delegate, Moshe Y. Rom, Lourié opposed the setting up of the Jewish National Fund by the Congress on the basis of nothing more than a bare outline of the Fund's regulations, and demanded that the regulations of this financial institution should be carefully drawn up in full by experienced jurists and presented to the Sixth Congress. This proposal, arising apparently from Lourié's bitter experience during the establishment of the Colonial Bank, was lengthily debated by, among others, Herzl, Bodenheimer, Kokesh, Victor Jacobson, Shalit, and Lourié's own brother Leopold. As a man to whom cultural work was also of deep concern, Grigory Lourié was amongst those that pressed for its inclusion in the Zionist effort, and we find his name in the list of delegates who expressed their wish to address the Fifth Congress on this subject. When the

Democratic Faction walked out of the debating hall on this issue, Lourié, though not a member of the Faction, joined them⁴⁰. Grigory Lourié's name does not appear among those taking part in the Zionist conference held in Vienna, between the Fifth and Sixth Congresses, on Oct. 28-30th, 1902, nor yet among the directors of the Colonial Bank who were elected at that conference.

Striking testimony to the power of Lourié's personal influence within the Zionist movement is to be found in four letters written to him from Geneva at the end of 1902 and the beginning of 1903 by Chaim Weizmann, three of them in German and the fourth in Russian⁴¹. After reminding Lourié of their conversations in Pinsk, Weizmann informs him that groups have been formed to propagate the idea of establishing "a Jewish school of higher learning" (i.e. a university) and requests him "to help us in our work... since with your personality and your connections you can do a great deal for us... The questionnaires will be sent to you for you kindly to express your opinion of them... After you have put in a good word for us to Mr. Kan, we shall write to him...". In the third letter, Weizmann writes about "the Jewish school of higher learning" and discusses the (as it seems to him) precarious condition of the Zionist movement. He stresses the power of Lourié's influence — even at that date — both in connection with the establishment of the proposed Jewish university and in helping to clarify and improve the general Zionist situation, and adds: "It is your duty to help us... I know that you have always adopted a balanced attitude to the activities of our party and I therefore very much want to hear your opinion...". The contents of this letter would seem to suggest that, in his replies to Weizmann's previous letters, Lourié had expressed opposition to the decision to support the establishment of a university on condition that it be set up only in Palestine. We do not know what action Lourié took after receiving Weizmann's letters.

The Weizmann letters in the Rehovoth archives testify to the close personal relationship between Weizmann and Grigory Lourié. As already stated, there was a disagreement between them in about the middle of 1903. Grigory's house was a meeting-place for the Pinsk Jewish intelligentsia, and a year

later, on April 4th 1904, we find Weizmann writing: "I have just had a visit from Shaichik [Shaul Lourié],... We shall meet today at Grigory's. All the Pinsk 'Europeans' have been invited to his house"⁴¹.

In 1902 Lourié attended the Zionist conference at Minsk and was elected (presumably on the strength of his having formerly been one of the Bank's directors) to the committee charged with the organization of "clubs for the sale of Colonial Bank shares" in Russia. The conference accepted his proposal calling for the publication of detailed information about the Bank's activities (including its balance-sheets) in the Russian Jewish press, and also adopted various suggestions of his for the improvement of the Bank's management. He himself appeared before the conference to present the Control Committee's report on the financial state of the movement.

On his way home from the Minsk conference (which ended on Nov. 10th 1902), Grigory Lourié met Major Evans-Gordon, a member of the British Royal Commission on Alien Immigration, brought him back with him to Pinsk, and took him on a tour of the neighbouring small towns to show him the conditions of Jewish life there. In Pinsk itself, he arranged for Evans-Gordon to meet the local Zionists, and Gordon's visit was remembered by Georg Halpern in 1961. Chaim Weizmann also took part in this tour. Afterwards, Grigory Lourié wrote the following letter (now in the central Zionist archives in Jerusalem), to Nahum Sokolow with a copy to Dr. Herzl who, of course, had appeared before the above-mentioned British Commission.

Lourié wrote (in German) as follows:

"Pinsk, Sept. 3/16, 1902.

My dear Mr. Sokolow,

I think that, after having visited several Jewish communities in Russia, Major Gordon has now formed roughly the following opinion: that the Jews are industrious and intelligent artisans who love their work, but are subjected to innumerable oppressions; that the statistics given by Mr. Joseph (Welt, No. 29, p. 3) are not correct; and that the

40. Yisrael Klausner, *Opozitsiyah le-Herzl*, p. 147, Jerusalem 1960.

41. The Letters and Papers of Chaim Weizmann, Volume I, II, III, Indexed Letters, London 1968, 1970, 1972. See also *ibid*, Vol. I, letters 13, 40, 304, 316 and Vol. III, letter 215.

word 'persecution' means, for its victims, brutal expulsion from their homes, and the like.

Legislation limiting the entry of aliens into England may perhaps reduce the numbers of aliens entering the country (as in America) by 10% or 15%. But, as against this, it will increase the importance of the Jewish problem and add to the Jews' sufferings. Rumania, Russia, and the other countries are likely to conclude that the Jews are indeed a harmful entity... and it is unworthy of England, the champion of freedom, to bring about anything of this kind.

Please visit Major Gordon in the Bristol Hotel and be so good as to let me know your impressions. In my humble opinion, it is your lofty duty to try to arouse his [Gordon's] interest in Zionism. I think that he is sympathetically disposed to every good cause.

With sincere regards,

Yours most respectfully,

G. Lourié"

To the copy of the above letter sent to Dr. Herzl, Lourié appended the following note:

"My dear Dr. Herzl,

On the other side of this sheet you will find a copy of my letter to Mr. Sokolow.

With the greetings of Zion,

Yours sincerely and respectfully,

G. Lourié

Pinsk, Sept. 3/16, 1902".

Herzl's visit to the Russian minister, Pleve, in Petersburg in 1903, after the ban on the sale of Colonial Bank shares in Russia, was arranged with the help, not of Lourié, but of Dr. Nisan Katzenelson, one of the Bank's directors; and Lourié's name was missing from the list of the six Russian representatives of the Bank which Herzl handed to Pleve on Dec. 12th 1903. Nor was Lourié present at the Sixth Congress, which was held in August 1903. He did attend the Seventh Congress (in August 1905), once again as a Pinsk delegate, but his name does not appear in the list of speakers or as a member of any of the committees. After that, he attended only the Eleventh Congress (in 1913), where once again he is not mentioned among the speakers.

From the time of the Minsk conference of

Russian Zionists (in 1902), Lourié's Zionist and other public activity was mainly confined to his native town of Pinsk. In 1904 he founded a library which was instrumental in the spread of general education, especially among the town's Jewish youth. At the time of the anti-Tsarist ferment in the Pinsk "Realschule", Lourié joined the ranks of the fighters for civil rights. He was also a representative of the ICA (Jewish Colonization Association) information bureau set up to answer questions about the possibilities of Jewish emigration from Russia. When Druyanov visited Pinsk (in 1911) and held a meeting in the house of Ozer Weizmann (Chaim Weizmann's father) to encourage the sale of the Colonial Bank shares, Lourié was one of those present. He also helped the Pinsk Women's Charitable Association in its activities, being the only male member of the organization. And he of course did all this work without asking for, or receiving, any remuneration.

It has already been remarked that Grigory Lourié was idealistic to the point of unworldliness, completely neglecting his own private affairs in his selfless work for the good of the Jewish community. The money-grabbing clerks employed in his factories took advantage of his not keeping a watchful eye on them to cheat him out of his wealth and reduce him to abject poverty. In this desperate plight, he abandoned all his remaining property to his creditors, left the town in which his family had lived for generations, and went to live in Petersburg (before the outbreak of the First World War). Although his lack of business ability may also have been partly responsible for these developments, there is no doubt that his idealism was an important factor in his material failure. In Petersburg, Lourié made a bare living, during the First World War, from various odd business jobs. The members of the Zionist Centre (which was for a time located in Petrograd) treated him with respect, as did Ussishkin, remembering Lourié's youthful services to the Zionist cause and his co-operation with Herzl, Wolfson, and Kan in the early days of the movement. But Lourié himself no longer took any active part in Zionist work, visiting the Centre only on rare occasions and the offices of the Zionist paper "Petrograder Togblat" not at all. Hayyah Weizmann-Lichtenstein, who took part in the Zionist conference in Petrograd in May 1917 and was personally

acquainted with Grigory Lourié, her fellow-townsmen and neighbour, refers to many of her acquaintances (including the veteran Pinsk Zionist, Meir Lieberman) who attended the conference, but makes no mention of Lourié's name⁴². Grigory Lourié died of a heart attack in Petrograd, at the end of 1917.

His wife Rivkah — “Reveka Savelyevna” as she used to be called in Pinsk — was the daughter of Shepsel (Shabbethai?) Simhovich of Kiev and of Feige(?), the daughter of Meir Levin originally from Pinsk, who later settled in Kiev. This Meir Levin was (as noted above) the eldest son of Moshe-Yitshak Levin, the brother of Hayyah Lourié and second son of Shaul Karliner. Since Grigory Lourié's mother, Beileh, was also (as stated by Aharon Lourié in his above-quoted letter of Iyyar 19th 1863 to Y.L. Gordon) a daughter of Meir Levin, Rivkah was Grigory's cousin. This was in accord with the Lourié practice of marrying within the Lourié-Levin family. Of Shabbethai Simhovich we know that, in the eighties of the last century, he was head of the Pinsk Talmud Torah⁴³; and we also find his name among the Pinsk merchants who signed a petition to the Minsk provincial governor, on Nov. 8th 1862⁴⁴. He too moved from Pinsk to Kiev, like his father-in-law, Meir Levin. Yonah Simhovich, who was most probably Shabbethai's son, married Odel, the daughter of David Lourié, and remained a resident of Pinsk, where (as described in detail below) he continued his father's tradition and was associated with the members of the Lourié family in their concern for the education of the rising generation⁴⁵.

42. H. Weizmann-Lichtenstein, *op. cit.*, p. 226. Grigory Lourié's letters to Sokolow and to Herzl are in the Central Zionist Archives, Jerusalem, Dokument Z 1/337.

43. *Hamelits*, 1863, No. 20, p. 312.

44. *Hacarmel*, 1863, No. 30, pp. 241—244.

45. In the genealogical trees made available to me by Havvah and Benjamin Hareli, two of the descendants of the Lourié-Eliasberg families, we find the name of “Rivkah Simhovich, the wife of Shemuel, the son of Moshe-Hayyim Eliasberg from Ivenets”, who died in 1873. This Rivkah was the daughter of Hirsch Simhovich (died 1852), and the granddaughter of Hayyim Simhovich (died 1826) who was the son of Hirsch-Shamash Simhovich of Minsk (died in 1799). The identity of name — Rivkah Simhovich — points to the genealogical relationship between the two women.

Rivkah Lourie was a loyal helpmate to her husband, Grigory. Besides actively assisting him in the running of the Pinsk Trade School for Girls, she all her life patiently and uncomplainingly bore the burden of her husband's neglect of his own affairs in his selflessly devoted pursuit of his ideals. This was the time of the early Zionist Congresses and the establishment of the Colonial Bank in London, when Grigory's thoughts and energies were completely taken up with organizing the sale of the Bank's shares throughout Russia. As one of the directors of the Bank (an office for which he received no emolument) he was obliged in those days to travel to meetings in London and Vienna, and sometimes also to stay in London to attend to the affairs of the Bank. This life of constant travelling, together with his numerous and varied activities on behalf of the Pinsk Jewish community, had a disastrous effect (as already described) on his management of his own business concerns, with the result that he and Rivkah were compelled to turn for assistance to their relatives and friends. Although all this must have caused Rivkah Lourié great mental and emotional suffering, her understanding and admiration for her husband never wavered and she nobly supported him in all his idealistic undertakings. She agreed to their home in Pinsk being thrown open as a meeting-place for the town's Jewish intelligentsia, particularly for Zionist activities; and it was thanks to her generous and hospitable spirit that anyone in need of help or advice was made to feel welcome there at all times. It is no mere chance that Chaim Weizmann, when a pupil at the government “Realschule” in Pinsk, was a frequent visitor to Grigory and Rivkah Lourié's home, as he was again later when, as a student, he returned from abroad to his hometown.

We have already described how, on the eve of the First World War, Grigory Lourié lost all his money and, leaving all his property in Pinsk in the hands of his creditors, moved with his family to Petersburg. It is related that, when they were about to set out, penniless, on their way, his wife expressed a wish to take with her just one thing — her Sabbath candlesticks. But Grigory would not let her, on the grounds that the candlesticks too were now no longer his, but also belonged to their creditors. In Petersburg, Rivkah lived in very difficult circumstances. When Grigory died at the

end of 1917, she returned to Pinsk with her younger son, Miron, and was very warmly welcomed by her family (the Louriés and Eliasbergs) and old friends. But Miron left Pinsk and went to Odessa to continue his training as a sailor; while Sasha, Rivkah's elder son, remained in Western Europe and she lost touch with him too, thus being left completely alone, without husband or children. Nevertheless, despite all her hardships and troubles, Rivkah Lourié did not lose her energetic determination and earned her own living as a cashier in one of the Pinsk banks. She thus worked as a clerk in a public institution the prototype of which had been established in Pinsk forty years earlier by her father-in-law, Aharon Lourié, and in the very same bank of whose board of directors her husband, Grigory, had been the chairman. She died in Pinsk (in 1935 or 1936).

Sasha Lourié, Grigory's and Rivkah's eldest son (born, probably in Pinsk, in 1891), completed his studies at the Pinsk government "Realschule" at the age of seventeen. During Sasha's schooldays, the student Chaim Weizmann boarded in his parents' house and helped him by giving him private lessons. Sasha grew up to be a man of outstanding intellect and wide reading, a polyglot, and a gifted orator. When the Russian-language newspaper "Pinski Listok" ["The Pinsk Bulletin"] began to appear in Pinsk (1910/11), Sasha Lourié was one of the three members of the editorial board, contributing mainly popular reviews and articles on current questions. Before the First World War he left Pinsk and moved with his parents to Petersburg. There, in 1912, he began to study archeology and joined the Jewish Students' Association. In 1915 he proceeded to Stockholm, where he edited the Russian-language paper "Skandinavski Vestnik" ["The Scandinavian Herald"]. At the end of the First World War, an attempt was made to set up a "National Byelorussian Republic"; and this idea of autonomy for Byelorussia, as for Poland and the Baltic countries, continued to be supported by the Allied Powers even after most of the territory in question, including the intended capital, Minsk, had been occupied by the Bolsheviks, as well as the remaining western part by Poland. This "Autonomous Byelorussian Republic" had "representatives" in various countries. In 1921, Sasha Lourié was the "Byelorussian representative" in the Lithuanian

capital, Kovno. It was in this state — Lithuania — that one of Grigory Lourié's friends and fellow-townsmen, the lawyer Shimshon Rosenbaum, set up an autonomous Jewish political unit which he himself headed, first as the Chairman of the Jewish National Council, and afterwards as the Minister for Jewish Affairs. At the same time and in the same country, one of Grigory Lourié's sons was serving as the representative of a foreign — though actually fictitious — state, and devoting all his energies to the cause of obtaining independence for it. This meeting of two men from the same town and the same Jewish background, but with such diametrically opposed outlooks, is symbolical of the two main courses taken by modern Jewish history, and in particular it strikingly brings out the great contrast between the way chosen by Sasha Lourié and that followed by his ancestors. In 1922, Sasha was the Byelorussian representative in Danzig. While in Kovno and Danzig, in the years of the great movements of population following on the First World War, he helped many stateless **people by providing them with passports and official documents.** I myself was so helped by him in 1921, when I escaped to Lithuanian Kovno from the advancing Polish army, Sasha Lourié married a Finnish Christian woman, the owner of an estate near Zoppot, which was close to Danzig where he lived. After the hopes of establishing an independent Byelorussia had finally come to nothing, we find Sasha Lourié working as the correspondent of a German newspaper and living in Kiel, in northern Germany, a town without any Jewish population and notorious for its anti-semitism even in the time of the Weimar Republic. He remained there until the Nazis came to power. When last heard of, he was living in the negro republic of Haiti.

Here, then, is the history of six generations:

Shaul Karliner (Levin) — communal leader and philanthropist.

Hayyah Lourié, his daughter — philanthropist.

Moshe Lourié, her son — a patriarchal Jewish figure.

Aharon Lourié, son of Moshe — one of the leaders of the Pinsk and Karlin communities.

Grigory Lourié, son of Aharon — nationalist, Zionist, worker for Jewry.

Sasha Lourié, son of Grigory — remote from Judaism and unable to find his place in the world.

Six generations representing six chapters of Jewish history.

Miron Lourié was Grigory and Rivkah Lourié's younger son. His Jewish name was apparently Meir, after his father's and mother's grandfather Meir Levin, the eldest son of Moshe-Yitshak Levin (see above). Miron was born in 1900. He made the sea his career and sailed on ships based on the port of Odessa. After the First World War, when his mother returned to Pinsk, he joined her there, but soon returned to his port. Further details of his life are unknown.

Grigory Lourié's brother Leopold, was also a man of wide learning and a Zionist. Wishing to diffuse general education among the young generation of Jews in his town, he in 1888 taught secular subjects in the Karlin Talmud Torah. Not having a licence to teach, he was fined by the police, but only the nominal sum of three roubles since "he did his work without remuneration". He then moved to Lodz, and attended the Fifth Zionist Congress as one of that town's delegates. His name appears in the list of those who took part in the debates on the Jewish National Fund and the Colonial Bank. In 1903 he attended the Sixth Zionist Congress. In the thirties of this century, Leopold Lourié, with his wife Dora and his brother Asir (Asher), returned from Lodz to spend their last years in their native town, but took no part in public life there. They were presumably wiped out in the Nazi holocaust.

The other children of Aharon Lourié were: a son Shemuel who, together with his brother Grigory, opened the previously mentioned banks in Homel and in the small towns of Klintsi, Pochep, and Zhlobin; a son, Alexander, who remained in Moscow; a son, Ovsei (Hoshea?, Asher?) whose own son Alexander is now living in Tel Aviv and whose daughter Maria is living in Paris; a son Shaul, now in Dresden; a son, Yitshak, who lived in Warsaw; a daughter, Rahel, who married Shaul Weinreich and who also went, with her mother, to live in Dresden. Her two daughters immigrated to Israel. One of them, Frieda Hanf-Weinreich lived in Haifa till her death there (1965); the other daughter,

Dr. Anni Samuelsdorf lived in Tel Aviv and was an active worker in the Zionist Organization till her death there in 1971. A brother of theirs, Ismar, lives in London. Another brother, Max, lived in Tel Aviv and died there.

On Dec. 2nd 1917, an "Association to Help the Jews of Pinsk" was founded in the Moscow home of Yitshak-Asher Naidich. Its members were all natives of Pinsk (like Naidich himself), who, in the light of the report by the Central Jewish Committee in Copenhagen, had decided to band together to help relieve the hardships of their brethren in Pinsk. Among their number we find the names of "As[ir] and Y[itshak], the sons of A[haron] Lourié".

All the above details show the extent to which the members of one branch of the Lourié family from Pinsk became scattered in various parts of the world.

Next, the other children of Moshe Lourié:

Shemuel Lourié (born in 1850), who was married to Tirzah, the sister of Yosef Halpern, and died young (1888).

Iser — Isidore Lourié (born in 1851), who established large industrial enterprises in Libau (Latvia). His wife was Agatha, the daughter of his maternal uncle and brother-in-law Eliyahu Eliasberg, who built the Pinsk tallow candle factory. In 1880, Isidore Lourié donated a large sum for the building of the Pinsk Talmud Torah school to be named after his first wife, Beileh⁴⁶. He also took charge of the Karlin Talmud Torah and provided for its needs, after Mikhal Ettinger left Pinsk (in about 1879). A journalist of those days calls on "... the noble gevir [rich man] Isidore Lourié (who should intervene in the affairs of the Talmud Torah school and be greatly moved by the fate of its young pupils) to see... and note every shortcoming"⁴⁷. And in a subsequent article we read the following: "...Those in charge of the Talmud Torah school, the noble gevir, Isidore Lourié, and the maskil, H. Ratin, have also ceased to exercise any supervision or control over it and pay no attention to the pupils' conduct and the methods of teaching... Rouse yourself and take new courage, Isidore Lourié, noble and generous

46. S. M. Rabinowitsch, *op. cit.*, p. 11.

47. *Hamaggid*, 1880, No. 35, p. 300.

gevir"⁴⁸. Isidore Lourié died in Wiesbaden in 1920.

A daughter, Beileh, (born in 1844) who was married to Idel Lourié, the son of her paternal uncle, Shemuel Lourié. As already noted, this Idel Lourié was the pioneer of private banking in Pinsk and in other towns in the Jewish "Pale".

A daughter Zeldah (born in 1845, died at the age of 33) who was married to her maternal uncle, Eliyahu Eliasberg.

A daughter Rahel (born in 1847, died in Pinsk in 1931) who was the wife of Moshe-Hayyim Eliasberg, the son of her mother's cousin (see below).

These marriage details have been mentioned here in illustration of the practice then prevalent among the Louriés, as among the Rothschilds, of marrying either within their own family or into other well-known families that were related to them.

Shemuel Lourié, the second son of Hayyah and Aharon Lourié, (born 1826 in Pinsk) moved to the provincial capital, Minsk, where he opened a private bank. His son Idel (born 1845) returned to Pinsk, after marrying Beileh, the daughter of his paternal uncle, Moshe Lourié, in 1861. His father-in-law had made Pinsk an industrial centre in the second half of the 19th century; now, at the century's end, Idel Lourié established a private banking system for the town's factory-owners and businessmen. Together with his cousin, Shemuel the son of David Lourié, he set up — in addition to the Pinsk bank — a whole banking network with branches in the towns of Dubno, Lutsk, Zhitomir, Polonnoye and other places. Since the main office was in Rovno (Volhynia), the whole network was called "the Rovno Bureau" ("Rovner Kontor"). Run on the pattern of all the large European banking houses of the day, these banks were known in the Russian business world as "the bank of Idel and Sam[uel] D[avidovich] Lourié". They financed deals in agricultural produce in three provinces, and employed a large staff of Jewish clerks. The regular appeals made by the Jews of Pinsk to this financial concern for contributions to charity and to institutions of social welfare were usually answered, though not with that devoted concern for the Jewish poor which was so characteristic of the

Lourié tradition. Idel Lourié spent his last years in Wiesbaden where he died in 1928.

Round about the year 1890, Chaim Weizmann was living in Idel Lourié's house as private tutor to his son, Shaul. In the Weizmann Archives there are six letters from Weizmann to Ovsei (Yehoshua) Lourié, Shaul's brother, written after Ovsei had gone to the town of Mitau (in Courland) to continue his studies. These letters from the years 1890—1892, which were written by Weizmann while he was living in Idel Lourié's house, testify to the sincere friendship between Weizmann and Ovsei Lourié, and also to the atmosphere in which the younger generation grew up in such Pinsk Jewish homes as those of the Lourié and Weizmann families. In the letters, Weizmann adopts a tone of pedagogical exhortation to his friend (who was only one year younger than himself). He quotes (inaccurately) an example from the talmud, but mostly he writes about Russian literature — the letters are actually written in Russian — and about the reading of its basic texts. The influence of Weizmann's education at the government "Realschule" in Pinsk can be felt throughout the letters, but without any dimming of his Jewish consciousness. Idel Lourié's views on Jewish education are described by Weizmann in a letter of Nov. 11th 1890 to Ovsei Lourié, as follows: "Your parents... want you to be a virtuous and noble youth, and to grow up into a well-educated and mentally developed man and an exemplary Jew". This combination of a general and a Jewish education, of polished social manners and pride in being Jewish, was also, according to Weizmann, the ideal of the whole Lourié family. Ovsei Lourié subsequently studied in Riga. Till 1914, he assisted his father. During the First World War the latter transferred his banks to Yekaterinoslav, where they were finally closed. In 1920, Ovsei went to London and became a business partner of his brother, Shaul. He died in London in 1941.

Idel Lourié's son, Shaul (born 1879), was Chaim Weizmann's private pupil from about 1888 to 1892. From the above-mentioned letters of Weizmann to Ovsei Lourié it can be seen how much care Weizmann took with the education of Shaul, who was five years his younger. In 1897, at the age of 18 Shaul Lourié went to Germany. After registering there as a student at the Darmstadt technical institute, he travelled to Basel to attend the First Zionist Congress. For this reason, I

48. Hamaggid, 1880, No. 47, p. 400, and No. 48, p. 408.

Hochgeehrter
Herr Dr. Herzl!

Auf der Rückseite
finden Sie Kopie meines
Briefes an Herrn Sokolow.

Hochachtungsvoll
und ergebend
mit Freundschaft

Grigory Lourie

Grigory Lourie's letter to Dr. Herzl, attached to the copy
of the printed letter to Sokolov (16th September 1902)

ГРИГОРИ ЛУРЬЕ
ПИНСКЪ
МЯСКОЙ ГУБ.
GRIGORY LOURIE
PINSK.

Pinsk 16 Mai 1900

From Dr. Th. Herzl
Wien

Hochgeehrter Herr Doktor!

Meine Depesche von heute ist mein
letzter Eingriff in die Angelegenheiten
des Traus! Ich rufe Ihnen nochmals
zu: Sie ruinieren den Traus!!!

Der Monat Mai sollte uns große
Geldeingänge von den Aktionären
geben, es war alles so schön vor-
bereitet — und aus einmal bläst
der Traus gerade für Mai ganz ohne
Einkommen!

Sie ruinieren den Traus weil Sie
ein Einkommen entlassen ohne
ein anderes eingesetzt zu haben. —

Sie müssen das. Wskatsn - Rabino -

Grigory Lourie's letter to Dr. Herzl about the crisis in the
affairs of the Colonial Bank (Pinsk 1900)

Pinsk, d. 16 Septemb. 1902.
Sehr geehrter Herr Sokolow!

Wie mir scheint hat Herr Sforzinski
jetzt nachdem er einige Orte in England
besucht hat, ungefähr folgende Ansicht.

Die Juden sind arbeitssam, fleißig
und intelligent; die Verfolgung ist aber
über alle Erwartungen! Die Statistik
des H. Joseph (S. 29 Seite 3. Mitt.)
ist unrichtig oder besser die Verfolgten
verstehen unter Verfolgung ein
„Herausjagen“ etc.

Von der Emigration in England
beschränkendes Gesetz würde zwar die
Emigration nicht (wie in Amerika)
um 10 oder 15% herabmindern, aber

andere die Judenfrage resp. Juden-
sata regrossern, indem Russen,
Russl. etc. den Schluss ziehen würden
dass die Juden wirklich ein schädli-
ches Element sind.

aber nicht für das freie England
in dieser Richtung aus das schädliche
zu verdrängen. —

Bitte besuchen Sie gefl. Herrn
Major Gordon Hotel Bristol, dort
und wird es mich sehr freuen
wenn Sie die Zeit finden werden
mir das Geruchat Ihrer Einladung
mitzuteilen. Ich hätte es für Ihre

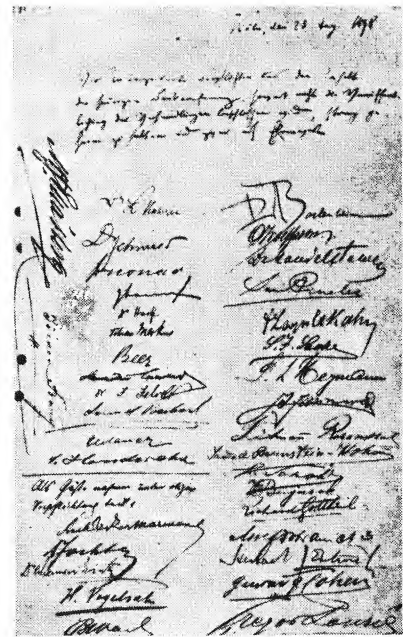
bedeutsame Pflicht sein das geruchat. offi-
zu geben dem Herrn für die jüdische
Emigration zu interessieren, es scheint mir
für alles Gute sehr zugänglich zu sein
Hochachtungsvoll mit herzlichem
Gruß

Lourie

74/337

Grigory Lourie's letter to Nahum Sokolov (16th September 1902)

Editorial board of the "Pinski Listok" Newspaper. In the middle — Sashah Lourié. On the left — the editor Asher Holtsman. On the right — member of the board Bonie Rubinstein (1910)



The signatures of the participants in the founding conference of the Colonial Bank at Cologne on Aug. 25th 1898. Grigory Lourié's signature appears at the bottom right, and Moshe-Hayyim Eliasberg's in the margin at the top left.



Idel, the son of Shemuel Lourié, and his family (Pinsk 1900)

reproduce here some of his reminiscences of that time, as written by him in a letter to me in reply to my questions: "I went to Basel, because the Congress aroused my interest. I remember the great impression made on me by the large banners with Zionist slogans on them flying over the Congress building, when in Russia everyone was afraid of mentioning the name 'Jew' in public. I telephoned the secretary of the Congress, Herr Reich from Austria, to enquire whether I could take part in the Congress. He replied: 'Yes. There are some communities in South Africa which were unable to send delegates and have therefore asked me to find people to volunteer to serve as their representatives and report to them on the proceedings'. I think that I represented Bulawayo in Southern Rhodesia; at any rate, in the report published by Herr Reich after the Congress my name appears as the representative of that country. Another similarly appointed 'representative' of a Jewish community in South Africa was Leon Simon, who later became a wellknown Zionist and translated *Ahad Haam's* works. At the Uganda Conference I was not actually a delegate, but was in close contact with Weizmann. I also knew Herzl. At the time of the split over the Uganda Programme, I sided with the opposition. Later, I helped to bring about a reconciliation between the supporters of the Programme and the Democratic Faction. In one of the published photographs from the Congress, I appear together with Herzl and Weizmann"⁴⁹. In 1901 Shaul Lourié worked in Chaim Weizmann's laboratory in Geneva. On his return to Darmstadt he became one of the founders of the "Maccabiah" Zionist Students Organization. We find his name, together with those of Motzkin, Weizmann, Buber, Leib Yafe, his relative and fellow-townsmen Georg Halpern, and others, in a list of leading Zionists who undertook (in 1903) to travel to university

towns in Germany, Switzerland, Belgium and other countries, in order to propagate the ideas of the Democratic Faction. During the years 1905—1939 Shaul Lourié was a businessman in London. He then went to the United States (Santa Monica, California), and died there, at the age of 91, on August 1970, one of the last surviving participants in the First Zionist Congress.

David Lourié (born 1828), the third son of Hayyah and Aharon Lourié, was associated with his brother Moshe in the establishment of the firm of "The Brothers Lourié & Co.", which was the first Jewish commercial company in Pinsk. The two brothers brought there steamboats from Germany and were among the first to put these vessels into operation between Pinsk and the towns of southern Russia. The author of a contemporary monograph on Pinsk (Janson), who writes approvingly of their work, notes that the firm of "The Brothers Lourié & Co." owned three ships which in 1867 plied the waters of the Pripiet and the Dniepr. And Y. L. Gordon, in one of his letters to Moshe Lourié's son Aharon, writes in 1868: "...Tell me... what kind of business is carried on by your firm 'The Brothers Lourié & Co.' I have heard that you have a steamboat... Do you deal in timber and grain, as your family has done for generations?". The Lourié steamboats were used for the transportation of timber, corn, and furs. David Lourié took no active part in Jewish communal life. However, it is known that in 1887 he and his brother Moshe gave a free weekly distribution of bread to the poor, and he was undoubtedly one of the "Karlin philanthropists" who in 1878 provided two free meals a day — breakfast and lunch — for seventy pupils of the Karlin Talmud Torah, and also supplied them with winter and summer clothing. A contemporary witness (Mordechai Kerman) records David Lourié's readiness to help needy individuals, and also relates how, like all the other members of the Lourié family, he used to visit the Karlin Av Beth-Din, the gaon R. David Friedman, on the eve of Rosh Hashanah, to exchange greetings with him for the New Year. David Lourié is included among the people referred to in the anonymous article (signed 'B.') of the year 1880 which has been quoted above⁵⁰: "...After them [sc. after Moshe-Yitshak

49. See A. Zenzifer, *Paamei ha-Geulah*, p. 112, Pl. 300, Tel Aviv 1952. In the Weizmann archives there are many letters testifying to the friendship between Weizmann and Shaul Lourié (Shaichik) and referring to their meetings in Pinsk, to the close personal relations between them in foreign countries, and to Shaul Lourié's active participation in the planning of the Hebrew University and in the problems of the Democratic Faction. See: *Letters and Papers of Chaim Weizmann, Indexed Letters*, Vol. I, II, III. In the archives there are also six letters from Weizmann to Ovsei Lourié, *ibid.*, Vol. I, Letters 3—8.

50. *Hamelits*, 1880, No. 14, p. 277.

Levin, Hayyah Lourié, Gad-Asher Levin] there are still their sons, the famous *gevirim*, who also continue to perform innumerable works of charity and to maintain the Talmud Torah and the *Bikkur Holim* [hospital], so that all the people of Karlin look to them for support... How much longer will they [sc. the people of Karlin] say, 'Let the *gevirim* [sc. the Lourié's] give; we need not bother'?" David Lourié lived in Karlin and contributed to the upkeep of the Talmud Torah built by his mother⁵¹.

The fact that all the Lourié family, in those days resided in Karlin gave Karlin a certain pre-eminence over Pinsk. Thus, in the article just quoted, we read: "Among the leaders of the Pinsk community... there are no *gevirim*... Whereas in our town Karlin there have always been famous *gevirim*, and to this day their renowned and glorious sons still live there... If you ask... who is called a *gevir*, you will immediately be told 'the wealthy Louriés'". On the other hand, in the same year another article-writer from Pinsk voices the following complaint: "Why does the respected Lourié family remain silent when the poor are suffering? Moreover, I marvel at the great unfeelingness... that our philanthropists do not bestir themselves to do something for them"⁵². These words were, of course, directed at the whole Lourié family.

David Lourié died in 1888. He had four sons, all of whom took up banking. But, whereas Moshe Lourié's son Aharon established a bank to serve the whole community — The Mutual Credit Society — in his native town Pinsk, David Lourié's sons opened private banks in other towns. One son, Aharon, started a bank in Kiev; another, Isidore(?), in Minsk; a third, Iser, in Warsaw; and only the fourth son Shemuel, opened a bank in Pinsk, which was later amalgamated with that of his cousin, Idel. These two cousins also started up banks in other towns, including Rovno, Dubno, Lutsk, Zhitomir, Polonnoye (see above). And Shemuel alone opened a bank in Korbin. David Lourié himself had nothing to do with the establishment or management of social institutions, but his wife Rushka (the daughter of Shemuel Eliasberg from Ivenets) and his son-in-law Yonah

Simhovich (his daughter Odli's husband) were active in this respect. Rushka Lourié, together with her sister Miriam-Lea Lourié (the wife of Moshe Lourié) and her husband's step-sister, Gite Ettinger, and Yosef Halpern, ran the *Somekh Nofelim* [Supporter of the Falling] social welfare society. While Yonah Simhovich, aided by Moshe-Hayyim Eliasberg (the son-in-law of Moshe Lourié) and Aharon Lourié, took over the management of the Karlin Talmud Torah built by Hayyah Lourié, and also founded a trade school in the town⁵³. The treasurer of this Talmud Torah was David Lourié's above-mentioned step-sister Gite Ettinger, the wife of Yosef Ettinger and mother of Mikhal Ettinger, all of whom took their share in the work of running the institution.

Yosef Ettinger also occupies a significant place in the annals of Pinsk (see the respectful reference to him in Y.L. Gordon's above-quoted letter of 1862 to Aharon Lourié). He took an active interest in the Pinsk Talmud Torah⁵⁴, befriended rabbinical scholars and used to lead the talmudic study-circle in the Karlin "Neistat" synagogue (as reported by Mordekhai Kerman in his reminiscences). His name appears among those of the Pinsk merchants who signed the petition of Nov, 8th 1862 to the Minsk provincial governor (see above).

Mikhal Ettinger, the son of Yosef and Gite, was (as already stated) the principal of the Karlin Talmud Torah from 1876 onwards, in place of Meir Levin, who had left Pinsk. A contemporary writer reports that people then began "to bring their sons to the school very willingly. The principal is the keen-witted, wise and highly estimable *rav* and *gevir*, Mikhal Ettinger (long may his light shine!), who has this year raised the number of pupils to three hundred"⁵⁵. Mikhal continued as the successful head of this institution for three years, till 1879 when he left Pinsk. In an article about the Karlin Talmud Torah dated the 28th Elul, 1880, we read: "However, one great lack is also evident in this school. For since the respected *gevir* M. Ettinger left our town in pursuance of his business affairs, the Talmud Torah has been without a trustworthy supervisor

51. *Hamaggid*, 1880, No. 35, pp. 300—301.

52. *Hamelits*, 1880, No. 3, p. 57.

53. *Hamelits*, 1887, No. 114, p. 1203.

54. *Hamelits*, 1863, No. 20, p. 312.

55. *Hamelits*, 1876, No. 115, p. 111.

to keep close watch over the pupils' conduct..."⁵⁶.

Yonah Simhovich, the son-in-law of David Lourié, had four daughters. The first, Teklah, was married to Sigmund Frumkin, a member of the Warsaw communal council and a road-building contractor. His son settled in Geneva. The second daughter, Rahel, was married to a man named Kogan, the owner of a sugar factory in Kiev. The third, Clara, was the wife of a lawyer named Ettinger. She too left Pinsk. What happened to the fourth daughter, Aka (Rivkah), is not known. Surviving descendants of this Simhovich family lived in Warsaw, Geneva, and England.

The Eliasberg Family

For all their public activities and their many contributions to social welfare, the members of the Lourié family held themselves aloof from the community as a whole. On the one hand, we have the testimony of one of their descendants, Yaakov Eliasberg (a grandson of Hayyah Lourié's son, Moshe) that, in addition to their active concern for communal institutions, the Louriés were always ready to help anyone with their advice, or to aid him in getting a position, obtaining credit, and the like. But, at the same time, they kept strictly to themselves and married only within their own family, as described above. In the course of time, however, the Lourié family circle was widened to include the members of the Eliasberg family, who belonged to "the aristocrats of Ivenets" (a small town in the province of Minsk) and who prided themselves on their descent from the gaon R. Yehezkeel Landau of Brody and Prague (the author of the book "Nod'a bi-Yehudah"). The wealthy and cultured Eliasbergs were, like the Louriés, part of the 19th century Lithuanian Jewish aristocracy. After intermarrying⁵⁷ with the Louriés,

the Eliasbergs joined them in their work on behalf of communal institutions in Pinsk. The marriage connections between the two families go back to the time of the Levin family's ascendancy in Pinsk. The daughter of Wolf Levin, the third son of Shaul Karliner (see above), was given in marriage to Yitshak—Isaac Eliasberg of Ivenets. Her husband was a man of wide education and culture who is reported by the Pinsk writer, A.D. Dobzevich, to have befriended the first maskilim in the town⁵⁸. He was also one of the signatories to the already mentioned petition submitted, on behalf of the merchants of Pinsk, to the Minsk provincial governor on Nov. 8th 1862. Miriam-Leah, the wife of Moshe Lourié, together with her relative Feigel Levin, founded (c. 1875) the Somekh Nofelim ve-Yoledoth [Sick Aid and Maternity] society in Karlin, and was also one of the directors of the Karlin Beth Osef Zekenim [Old Age Home] which had been established by her mother-in-law, Hayyah Lourié. Miriam-Leah's sister, Rushka, the wife of David Lourié, was also a director of the Somekh Nofelim society. Their brother, Eliyahu Eliasberg, a son-in-law of Moshe Lourié, was one of the owners of the candle factory in Albrekhtovo, a suburb of Karlin (1872). He was the last

Her sister, Rahel, was married to Moshe-Hayyim Eliasberg of Minsk, the son of Yeshayahu, her mother's cousin; and her brother, Iser-Isidore Lourié, married Agatha (Gitl), the daughter of Eliyahu Eliasberg, who was Iser's maternal uncle and brother-in-law. The son of this Eliyahu Eliasberg, Shemuel Yonah, married a Lourié girl, and Shemuel, the son of Moshe-Hayyim and Rahel (née Lourié) Eliasberg, married Frieda, the daughter of his mother's uncle, David Lourié of Pinsk. Lippa (Leopold), the son of Moshe Lourié, gave his daughter Elizabeth in marriage to Dr. Vladimir Eliasberg, the grandson of Yeshayahu Eliasberg of Minsk. This Elizabeth immigrated to Israel (1951) and died there in 1965. Her daughter, Hannah is married to Ehud Avriel of the Israeli Foreign Ministry. Another daughter, Havvah, also works in this government office. The third daughter, Shoshannah lives in Jerusalem, and the fourth, Miriam, in America (see A. Epstein, *Kethavim*, Vol. I, p. 326, Jerusalem 1950. S. Ginsburg, *Megillah Rabbath Inyan, Yeda Am*, Vol. VIII, pp. 36—39; idem, *Historische Werk*, Vol. IV, p. 290; and genealogical trees supplied to me by Havvah and Benjamin Hareli — Eliasberg).

58. Dobzevich, *op. cit.*, pp. 40, 42.

56. *Hamaggid*, 1880, No. 35, p. 300.

57. There were at least nine marriage connections between these two families. Alexander-Sender, the son of Aharon Lourié (by his second marriage), married the daughter of Eliyahu, the son of Yitshak-Isaac Eliasberg of Ivenets, who was himself the son-in-law of Wolf Levin, the brother of Hayyah Lourié. Two of Hayyah Lourié's sons, Moshe and David, married the two daughters of Shemuel Eliasberg of Ivenets, Miriam-Leah and Rushke; and their brother, Eliyahu Eliasberg married the daughter of Moshe Lourié, Zeldah.

member of the Eliasbergs to hold the title of “gabbai of the Volozhin yeshivah”, and was known as one of the fiercest opponents of Zionism in the Lourié family. He was a particularly generous supporter of the Karlin Talmud Torah⁵⁹.

Moshe-Hayyim Eliasberg, another son-in-law of Moshe Lourié (through his marriage to the latter's daughter, Rahel), was the son of Yeshayahu Eliasberg from Ivenets, later of Minsk. As a Pinsk timber merchant, Moshe-Hayyim Eliasberg had business connections with Memel, Danzig, Königsberg, and Berlin. Of the town's communal institutions, he displayed a particularly active interest in the Talmud Torah built by Hayyah Lourié in Karlin. He was one of this school's principals (together with his brother-in-law, Aharon Lourié, and another member of the family, Yonah Simhovich), and used personally to examine the pupils in their studies. He and these two relatives of his also founded a trade school in the town “for the unpromising boys who have no talent for intellectual studies” (see above). Moshe-Hayyim Eliasberg was a widely read thinker, the course of whose life reflects the pattern of Jewish thought in the second half of the 19th century: *Haskalah* — *Hibbath Tsion* — Zionism. Of his personal qualities his son, Yaakov Eliasberg, writes in his autobiography as follows: “My father... made do with a talmudic and selftaught general education... He spent all his spare time reading books, newspapers, and journals. He was an annual subscriber to ‘Hamelits’, ‘Novosti’, ‘Voshod’, ‘Berliner Tageblatt’, and the Russian monthly ‘Ruskoye Bogatstvo’. Later, ‘Die Welt’ and ‘Hashiloah’ were added to this list. Even before the founding of the Zionist movement, my father was a member of Hovevei Tsion, the Pinsk representative of the Odessa Committee, and a serious student of Ahad Haam's teachings... He was a devotee of Hebrew, of which he had a fluent command, though not as a spoken language, since it was not spoken then... He used to read... the works of Y.L. Gordon, Avraham Mapu, and eventually Ahad Haam too... He had the writings of the best Russian authors and critics in his house... for in his youth he had studied not only talmud, but also Russian, and had got to know Russian

literature... so that his father-in-law regarded him as a man of wide general culture”. Moshe-Hayyim Eliasberg joined the Hovevei Tsion in the eighties of the last century, after Eliezer Ben-Yehudah had visited Pinsk together with Yaakov Shertok (a native of Pinsk and the father of Moshe Sharett). According to Mordekhai Kerman, it was through the influence of the well-known preacher, Hirsch Maslianski, that Eliasberg became the Pinsk representative of the Odessa Committee and one of the leading active members of Hovevei Tsion in the town. When Herzl brought political Zionism into being, Eliasberg was one of the first to join the movement. He was a Pinsk delegate to the Second and Sixth Congresses; and his signature appears among those of the participants at the conference held in Cologne (on Aug. 25th 1898) before the Second Congress, to discuss the setting up of the Colonial Bank⁶⁰. According to one source, he was also appointed by the Russian government to be inspector of the Jewish schools in Pinsk. In 1904, Moshe-Hayyim Eliasberg left Pinsk with his family and settled in Berlin, though he still for some time continued to maintain his office in Pinsk and to export timber to Germany. He died in 1920. His wife, Rahel, returned at the age of 81 to Pinsk, to the home of her son Yaakov, and died there in 1931.

Moshe-Hayyim Eliasberg's eldest son, Shemuel, completed his studies at the “Gymnasium” in Riga, where his paternal grandfather was then living. In 1900 he moved to Berlin and lived there for most of his life. He was the owner of a factory and a partner in an architect's office. During the Nazi regime he was in Warsaw, where he suffered a severe nervous breakdown and died in the hospital in the Jewish ghetto.

Moshe-Hayyim Eliasberg's second son, Aharon (born in Pinsk in 1879), followed in his father's footsteps, both politically and culturally. He joined the Zionist Organization, and was director of the publishing press of the “Jüdischer Verlag” in Berlin. After a childhood spent in Pinsk, he moved as a young man, for health reasons, to Wiesbaden where he lived in the house of the local rav and attended the “Gymnasium”. After that, he became a university student in Heidelberg,

59. Hamaggid, 1880, No. 35, p. 300.

60. H. H. Bodenheimer, *op. cit.*, the first signature at the left-hand margin in the photocopy.

together with Yosef Klausner, Tschernihovski, and others. He was at that time very closely associated with his fellow-townsmen and family-friend, Chaim Weizmann, both as a member of the Democratic Faction and as an active supporter of Weizmann's idea of establishing a Hebrew university in Jerusalem. Before the Fifth Congress, the office of the Democratic Faction was requested by the Zionist Executive Committee to name those of its members who wanted to attend the Congress as delegates, but had not received mandates. Aharon Eliasberg's name was one of those submitted by the office, and he was one of the Faction's 37 delegates to this Congress. In the debate that took place during the conference of German Zionists (1902), he spoke in defence of the Faction. He also appears in the photograph of the members of the Faction with Dr. Herzl, taken at Basel in 1901⁶¹. Among the delegates to the Fifth Congress who walked out of the proceedings in protest against the attitude of the Congress to the Faction's demands we find three members of the Lourié family: Aharon Eliasberg, Shaul the son of Idel Lourié, and Grigory the son of Aharon Lourié (though the last was not actually a member of the Faction). Yaakov Eliasberg records that his brother Aharon was prevented by illness from attending the Sixth Congress. During this Congress (1903), Weizmann expressed to Yaakov Eliasberg his regret at Aharon's being compelled by his illness to discontinue his share in the work of collecting and preparing the material for the founding of the university in Jerusalem. After his recovery, Aharon resumed his assistance to Weizmann in these efforts. In the Weizmann archives there are appreciative letters from Weizmann to Aharon Eliasberg which testify, to the friendly relations between the two men (Weizmann refers to Eliasberg by the affectionate diminutive "Aharonchik", presumably a habit from their childhood and youth in Pinsk). Eliasberg settled in Berlin, where he ran a publishing firm. In 1907 the "Jüdischer Verlag" was taken over by the Zionist Organization, and when in 1911 its offices were transferred from Cologne to Berlin, Aharon Eliasberg became its director, a post that he held until 1920. The publishing house developed and prospered under his management

61. A. Zenzifer, *Paamei ha-Geulah*, p. 112, photo 360, no. 33, Tel Aviv 1952.

and printed important books on Zionist and Jewish subjects. The warm nostalgic regard that Aharon Eliasberg continued to feel for Pinsk throughout his residence in Berlin is illustrated by the following story told by the well-known journalist Dr. Yehoshua Gottlieb, himself a native of Pinsk: "One day, I visited the main office of the Zionist Organization in Berlin. Suddenly, a man entered the room, came up to me, and said: 'Mr. Gottlieb, I invite you to my home for supper.' — 'Thank you... but... I don't yet know... with whom... I have the honour...', I stammered out in surprise. 'What difference does that make?' replied the man, with a smile. 'I heard that you were from Pinsk, and I too am from Pinsk. Isn't that fact sufficient to warrant our spending the evening together?'. The man who spoke to me was A. [Aharon] E-g [Eliasberg]. Although he was a very busy publisher, he spent from seven in the evening till two in the morning talking and thinking of nothing more lofty than the town where Jews sink into the mud to above their knees"⁶². Aharon Eliasberg immigrated to Palestine in 1933, and worked for Keren Hayesod. He died in 1937⁶³.

Yaakov Eliasberg, the youngest of Moshe-Hayyim Eliasberg's sons (born in Pinsk in 1881), was already 84 when he published his book "Be-Olam ha-Hafekhoth" ["In the World of Revolutions"] (Jerusalem 1965). This autobiographical work begins with memories from his childhood and youth in the Eliasberg and Lourié homes in Pinsk and goes on to tell of his wanderings in Germany and Russia during the revolutions, his return to Pinsk after the First World War and his life there for fifteen years under Polish rule till the Bolshevik occupation of the town (1939), and his immigration to Palestine during the Second World War (1943). As a background to these details of his own life, the author gives a description of the members of his family and of Jewish society as a

62. Pinsker Shtime, Pinsk 1930.

63. Y. Eliasberg, *Be-Olam ha-Hafekhoth*, pp. 24—25, 33, 45, 59—61, 56—66, 182, Tel Aviv 1965. The Letters and Papers of Chaim Weizmann, Indexed Letters, Vols. I, II, III. Y. Klausner, op. cit., pp. 94, 141, 168, 193. A. Böhm, *Die Zionistische Bewegung*, p. 605, Tel Aviv 1935. *Jüdisches Lexikon*, Vol. V, p. 1189, s.v.: "Jüdischer Verlag", Berlin 1930.

whole, particularly that of his own town Pinsk. His book is therefore an important historical source of information — occasionally the only such source — about Pinsk and the importance of the Lourié and Eliasberg families in the life of the town during the second half of the 19th century and the first part of the 20th, from the time of Hayyah Lourié, the mother of the author's grandfather, Moshe Lourié, down to the author's own day. As in all autobiographies, the author from time to time expresses his own personal opinion on the society and events that he describes. But in this case, the sober realism characteristic of advancing years can be felt in his judgments. He tells us that he was, in his time, "the only descendant of Moshe Lourié in Pinsk". From his description of the Louriés of his own generation who had left Pinsk, we learn that, while a minority of them remained loyal to their ancestral heritage in foreign lands, many of them turned aside — some of their own free will, other under compulsion — from the historical path of Judaism. Yaakov Eliasberg's life exemplifies both of these opposite developments, as he himself tells us in his book. On the one hand, he conducted prayers on the Day of Atonement for political prisoners in the Moscow gaol where he was himself detained, and wrote with great respect of the hasidic rebbes of Stolin and Chernobil. The youthful Chaim Weizmann, in one of his letters, advised his friends to apply to Yaakov Eliasberg for financial support for the programmes of the Democratic Faction⁶⁴. He also attended the meeting of the Jewish Agency in Basel as a member of the Keren Hayesod delegation, accompanied his father to the Sixth Zionist Congress, and visited Palestine in 1933. He fought with courageous and vigorous determination to protect the rights of the Jewish workers in the factory under his direction (including the right not to work on the Sabbath), despite the strong pressure brought to bear on him by the anti-semitic Polish government. He wrote with affectionate pride of the abilities of the Jewish worker, stressing that the unity of all the factory workers was an expression of their national consciousness. He was a member of Jewish self-defence organizations, both in his student days in Riga, and in later years in Pinsk. He kept up the

family tradition that he first learnt on his return to Pinsk after the First World War, from the owner of the family factory, his cousin Paul, the son of Leopold Lourié: "For our enterprise regularly supports all the local Jewish institutions, and this social aid is simply the necessary continuation of the traditional acts of charity performed for generations by the Lourié family". On the other hand, he married a Christian woman from a family of Russian aristocrats, who had been brought up by a Russian general, whose brother was a student at a naval officers' academy in St. Petersburg, and one of whose relatives was a Russian admiral. He writes most affectionately of his Christian wife's daughter and also of her son, who emigrated to the U.S.A. where he became friendly with the descendants of the Lourié family living there. Yaakov Eliasberg's home in Pinsk was a meeting place for members of the Jewish, Polish, and Russian intelligentsia, including Jewish "renegades" who had adopted Christianity to improve their material position and social prospects.

In striking contrast to these assimilationist tendencies was the moral nobility displayed by Yaakov Eliasberg's Russian wife, Lydia, in becoming a proselyte to Judaism. She took this step at the time of the Bolshevik revolution, when her husband had been thrown into prison without charge and without trial, and his property arbitrarily confiscated, so that she and her daughter by her first, Christian husband were left entirely dependent on the charity of friends. In this desperate situation she decided to embrace Judaism. What moved her to take this decision? Here is her own reply: "What made me decide to do this?... Neither I nor my husband had felt the need of a religious ceremony [in addition to their civil marriage]... My desire to become a Jewess was connected with a need to identify myself with my husband's people, and in this way I thought that I could break down the prison walls". When she told their family-friend, Lifshits, of her intention, he asked her, "Why do you have to do this?". "I don't actually have to do it", I replied, and explained my state of mind to him... The next day he tried to dissuade me: 'Remain a Christian and a Russian aristocrat... Does he [sc. her husband] know of your decision?'. 'No' ". When she went, on the day after this, to Rabbi Mazei in Moscow, he asked her: "Why is it that you have

64. The Letters and Papers of Chaim Weizmann, Vol. II, Letter 396.

come to me?'. I explained the matter to him. 'I beg you not to change your ancestral faith, but to remain faithful to your church', he said. 'We are satisfied', I told him, 'with only a civil marriage. But my husband has now been shut up in prison for five months and heaven alone knows what worse fate may yet befall him. By becoming a member of his people I shall feel closer to him'... He bowed courteously to me and I left him with a lighter heart... He said to Lifshits: 'Arrange for the mikveh... and then come to fetch me'... I returned from the mikveh in a carriage together with Rabbi Mazeh, who was sunk in silent thought".

After his return to Pinsk, Yaakov Eliasberg played an active and important part in the Jewish economic life of the town. He was, together with Beni Halpern chairman of the board of directors of the Jewish Commercial and Industrial Bank; was a great worker for the artisans' association, the "Oze" society and the orphans' home, and a member of the Benei Brith lodge; was elected consultant member of the Vilna office of commerce and industry; was arbiter in the dispute between the directorate of the Tarbut high school and the teaching staff; and the like. At the height of the Second World War, in 1943, he emigrated with his wife and daughter (Tamar) from Russia to Palestine and settled in Jerusalem. There he lived in modest circumstances and worked indefatigably at the writing of his memoirs, which were published by Ha-Sifriah ha-Tsionith, with an introduction by S. Y. Agnon. Yaakov

Eliasberg died in Jerusalem in 1966, and was followed shortly afterwards by his wife. They are survived by a daughter, Tamar Shrik, who lives in Bath Yam.



The story of the "Rothschild" families of Pinsk and Karlin is a reflection of six generations of the history of Russian Jewry. First, the growth and ramification of the families in their own town, and then, towards the end of the period, their dispersion all over the world. First, the influence on them of the centripetal pull towards Jewish values within Pinsk itself, followed by the effect of the centrifugal drift away from Judaism in foreign lands. In the clash between these two opposing forces, a minority of the latter-day descendants of these families succeeded in preserving their ancestral faith and tradition even in distant parts of the world. They found an outlet for their Jewish loyalties mainly in the Zionist movement and in settlement in Palestine, or in memories and stories of the legendary figure of the family's founder, Shaul Karliner, of "grandmother Hayyah", and of the patriarchalism of her brothers and sons. But many were the "grandsons" who were lost to Judaism through assimilation. At this same time, Pinsk was occupied by the Bolsheviks who put a stop to all Jewish religious and cultural life in the town. And after them came the Nazis who exterminated the Jewish population, leaving behind nothing of the Jewish communities of Pinsk but heaps of ruins and martyrs' graves.



Share of the Colonial Bank, dated 23.3.1900, signed by Grigory Lourié (right hand bottom corner)



Grigory Lourié and Women's aid Association in Pinsk



Aharon Eliasberg (1879-1937)

**LIST OF THE INSTITUTIONS ESTABLISHED OR DIRECTED
BY MEMBERS OF THE LEVIN—LOURIÉ — HALPERN — ELIASBERG FAMILIES**

The dates for the earlier period have been taken from the article "Al Pinsk, Karlin ve-Yoshevei hen" ["On Pinsk, Karlin and their Inhabitants"] by Shaul Mendl Rabinowitsch, the section on Kehilloth Yaakov, Talpiyoth, Berdichev 1895, and from the daily press of the time. Many dates are given approximately, for want of reliable sources of information.

Year	Name of Founder	Name of Institution
Before 1819	Shaul Karliner (Levin)	Built a beth midrash in Karlin.
Before 1819	id.	Built a beth midrash in Pinsk.
1834	id.	Left sums of money in his will for the above batei midrash, for social welfare institutions in Pinsk, Karlin and the neighbouring towns and for Jewish settlement in Palestine.
c. 1860	Moshe-Yitshak Levin	A synagogue bearing his name in Karlin (in Albrechtov-Kupecheski Street).
c. 1862	Hayyah Lourié	Built a Talmud Torah school in Karlin which was directed, successively by Meir Levin, Moshe-Hayyim Eliasberg, Aharon Lourié, Gite, Yosef and Mikhal Ettinger, Shabbethai and Yonah Simhovich.
c. 1862—1875	Meir Levin	Ran the Karlin Talmud Torah, and the town's heders [(religious) classes].
c. 1862	Meir Levin	Built a public bath for the Jews of Karlin.
1862 onwards	Aharon, son of Moshe Lourié	Contributed articles to "Ha Carmel" and "Tsion".
1862—1888	id.	Corresponded with Y. L. Gordon.
1863 onwards	Yosef Ettinger (husband of Gite, nee Lourié)	One of the directors of the Pinsk Talmud Torah.
1863 onwards	Shabbethai Simhovich	One of the directors of the Pinsk Talmud Torah.
c. 1865	Moshe-Yitshak Levin	Built the Karlin hospital, managed by Aharon Lourié.
Before 1865	Dinah Levin	Built a synagogue in Karlin (in Siever Street).
1865	Aharon-Moshe Padva, son of Akhsah Levin	Published his book "Beur Haram" ["The Commentary of R. Aharon Moshe"].
c. 1865	Wolf Levin	Established the agricultural farm Ivanik.
c. 1865	id.	Built(?) the beth midrash known as the "Pinsker Kloiz".
c. 1865	Hayyah Lourié	Built a synagogue in Karlin, in the "Synagogue Square".
c. 1865	Hayyah Lourié and Feigel Levin	Built an old-age home in Karlin, which was under the successive management of Miriam-Leah Lourié, Gite Ettinger, and Yosef Halpern.
1866/67	Hayyah Lourié	Set up a transit camp for refugees from the famine in the Kovno district.
c. 1867	Meir Levin	Built a synagogue in Karlin.
c. 1870	Gad-Asher Levin	Established a trade school for orphans and children of the poor.
c. 1870	id.	Built an old-age home in Pinsk.
1872	The Lourié Families	Among the founders of the Karlin Gemiluth Hasadim charity fund, which was managed by Aharon Lourié and Gite Ettinger.
1875	Miriam-Leah Lourié and Feigel Levin	Founded the Somekh Nofelim ve-Yoledoth [Sick Aid and Maternity] Society in Karlin, which was managed by the founders, Gite Ettinger, and Yosef Halpern.

Year	Name of Founder	Name of Institution
1876—1879	Mikhal Ettinger	Director of the Karlin Talmud Torah.
1877	Gad-Asher Levin	Left a sum of money for the setting up of a charity fund for the sick and aged.
1878	Moshe and David Lourié	Among the "Karlin Philanthropists" who provided the Talmud Torah pupils with food and clothing.
1880	Iser-Isidore Lourié	Renovated the structure of the Pinsk Talmud Torah, and was president of the Karlin Talmud Torah.
1880	Aharon, son of Moshe Lourié	Founded the Mutual Credit Society of which he was director until 1905.
c. 1880	Yosef Halpern	Life president of the Pinsk hospital.
1885—1888	The Lourié Families	Established a trade school in Hayyah Lourié's house, under the direction of Moshe Lourié's son, Aharon, Moshe-Hayyim Eliasberg and Yonah Simhovich.
1887	Moshe and David Lourié	Made a weekly allocation of bread to the poor, during a period of food shortage.
1888	Leopold, son of Aharon Lourié	Voluntarily taught secular subjects in the Karlin Talmud Torah.
1890	Moshe Lourié	Donated a thousand roubles to the Talmud Torah, hospital, and old-age home built by his mother in Karlin.
1890	id.	Provided the necessary financial support for the establishment of the Association of Jewish Shipowners in Pinsk.
1894	Grigory Lourié	One of the organizers of the "progressive heder" in Pinsk.
1895 onwards	id.	An active member of Hovevei Tsion.
1895 onwards	id.	Chairman of the Pinsk Mutual Credit Society.
c. 1889	id.	Instituted an 8-hour day for his workers.
1897—1913	id.	Delegate to the 1st, 2nd, (3rd), 4th, 5th, 7th, and 11th Zionist Congresses.
1897	Shaul, son of Idel Lourié	Delegate to the 1st Zionist Congress.
1897/98	Grigory Lourié	One of the founders of the Pinsk Zionist Club.
1898—1900	id.	One of the founders of the Colonial Bank, and its director.
1898	id.	Member of the founding conference of the Colonial Bank at Cologne.
1898, 1903	Moshe-Hayyim Eliasberg	Delegate to the 2nd and 6th Zionist Congresses.
1898	id.	Member of the founding conference of the Colonial Bank at Cologne.
c. 1898	id.	Appointed by the Russian government honorary inspector of the Jewish schools in Pinsk.
c. 1898	Eliyahu Eliasberg	Last member of the Eliasberg family to bear the title "Gabbai of the Volozhin Yeshivah".
1900	Moshe Lourié	Donated 10,000 roubles towards the erection of a new building for the Karlin Talmud Torah.
1900	Aharon Lourié	One of the founders of the Jewish Charitable Society.
1901	id.	Founded the Halvaah ve-Hisakhon Bank.
1901	Aharon and Alexander Lourié	Headed the rescue committee after the great fire.
1901, 1903	Leopold, son of Aharon Lourié	Delegate to the 5th and 6th Zionist Congresses.
1901	Shaul, son of Idel Lourié	Guest participant in the 5th Congress; member of the Democratic Faction.
1901	id.	One of the founders of the "Maccabiah" student organization in Darmstadt.

Year	Name of Founder	Name of Institution
1901/2	Aharon Lourié	Supervised the construction of the new building of the Karlin Talmud Torah with money left by his father.
1901	Aharon Eliasberg	Delegate to the 5th Congress, member of the Democratic Faction.
1901	Georg Halpern	Member of the Democratic Faction at the time of the 5th Congress.
1902	Aharon Eliasberg	Delegate to the Conference of German Zionists.
1902 onwards	id.	One of Weizmann's close associates in the preparation of the plan for setting up the Hebrew University in Jerusalem.
1902	Grigory Lourié	Delegate to the Minsk Zionist Conference.
1903	Moshe Lourié	Contributed to the repair of the Pinsk hospital.
1903	Alexander Lourié	Contributed to the repair of the Pinsk hospital.
1903	Yaakov Eliasberg	Guest participant in the 6th Zionist Congress.
1904	Leopold, son of Moshe Lourié	Chairman of the Vienna rescue committee for the pogrom refugees.
1904	Grigory Lourié	Established a library in Pinsk. Representative of the monthly journal "Yevreiskaya Shkola".
c. 1904	id.	Representative in Pinsk of the ICA Society for Jewish emigration.
1905	Alexander Lourié	"Advisor" in the Pinsk municipality, representing the town's Jewish population.
c. 1905	Grigory Lourié	Headed the Pinsk Women's Charitable Association.
c. 1909	Grigory Lourié and his wife Rivkah	Ran the girls' trade school of the above association.
1910/11	Sasha Lourié	Member of the editorial board of the "Pinski Listok".
1911—1920	Aharon Eliasberg	Director of the "Jüdischer Verlag" in Berlin.
1915/16	Alexander Lourié	Head of the "Citizens Committee" during the German occupation.
1915	Sasha Lourié	Edited a Russian newspaper in Stockholm.
1917	As[ir] and Yi[tshak?] sons of A[haron] Lourié	Members of the Moscow association to aid Pinsk Jewry.
1921	Beni (Bernhard) Halpern	Head of the Pinsk Committee for war refugees.
1921	id.	Made over his family home to be turned into an orphanage.
1921	Georg Halpern	Member of the Zionist Executive Committee; one of the directors of the economic bodies of the Zionist Movement.
1921/2.	Sasha Lourié	Representative of the "National Byelorussian Republic" in Kovno and Danzig.
1924	Beni Halpern	One of the founders of the Pinsk Commercial and Industrial Bank.
1924	Yaakov Eliasberg	One of the founders of the Pinsk Commercial and Industrial Bank.
1924—1939	The sons of Leopold and Alexander Lourié	Supported social welfare institutions in Pinsk, particularly those founded by Hayyah Lourié.
1924—1939	Yaakov Eliasberg	Resisted the Polish authorities in defence of the rights of the Jewish worker and of Sabbath observance in the Lourié factories.
1927	Leopold Lourié	Contributed to the setting up of the Gemiluth Hasadim charity fund.
1934	Yaakov Eliasberg	Advisor to the Vilna commercial and industrial bureau, on behalf of the Jewish merchants and industrialists.
1937	id.	Member of the Keren Hayesod delegation at the meeting of ["In the World of Revolutions"].
1965	id.	Published his autobiography "Be-Olam ha-Hafekhoth" ["In a World of Revolutions"].

**COMMERCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL ENTERPRISES ESTABLISHED IN PINSK
BY MEMBERS OF THE LEVIN—LOURIÉ—HALPERN—ELIASBERG FAMILIES**

Year	Founder	Enterprise
c. 1800—1834	Shaul Karliner (Levin)	Very well-established merchant. Dealer in timber and contractor for government works. Large property owner.
c. 1825	Zalman Levin	Well-established merchant. Probably dealt in timber and grain.
c. 1835—1872	Moshe-Yitshak Levin	Very well-established merchant, apparently from timber, grain, fats, and government contracts. "Merchant of the second guild".
c. 1835--1870(?)	Wolf Levin	Very well-established merchant. Dealer in timber, and apparently also in grain and fats, and contractor for government works.
c. 1835—1873	Hayyah Lourié	Developed Pinsk as an inland port and transport link between the Ukraine and the Baltic countries and Poland. Dealt, apparently, in timber, grain, fats, and salt. The wealthiest woman of her time in Pinsk. The title "Honorary Citizen of the Russian Empire" was bestowed upon her and her descendants by the Tsar Alexander II.
c. 1840	Heshe Rokeah	Very wealthy man. Dealt in loans.
Before 1862	Meir Levin	Operated a steamboat on the Pina and Dniepr rivers. "Merchant of the second guild".
1865	Moshe Lourié	Built a flour mill.
1867 onwards	"The Brothers Moshe and David Lourié"	Did business in timber, grain, and fats.
1867	id.	Operated 3 steamboats on the Pina and Dniepr.
1868	Meir Levin	Operated 2 river steam-boats.
1868	Gad-Asher Levin	Operated 2 river steam-boats.
c. 1868—1877	id.	Timber deals.
c. 1870	Idel, son of Shemuel Lourié	Bank.
c. 1870	Shemuel, son of David Lourié	Bank.
1872	Eliyahu Eliasberg & Co.	Candle and fat factory.
1872	Shemuel Rabinovich & Co.	Candle and fat factory.
1872	Moshe Lourié	Steam-powered flour factory
c. 1872	id.	Steam-powered oil-press.
1879/80	id.	Factory for wooden nails.
1880	Aharon Lourié	Mutual Credit Bank.
c. 1881	Moshe Lourié	Factory for wooden boxes.
1888	Grigory Lourié	Fat-processing mill.
1890	Moshe, Lipa and Alexander Lourié	Saw-mill.
1894/5	Lippa-Leopold Lourié	Improved and enlarged the factory for wooden boxes.
Before 1895	Grigory Lourié	Chemical works.
1897	Yosef Halpern	Bought and enlarged the match factory.
1898/99	"The Brothers L. [Leopold] and Al [Alexander] Lourié"	Plywood factory.

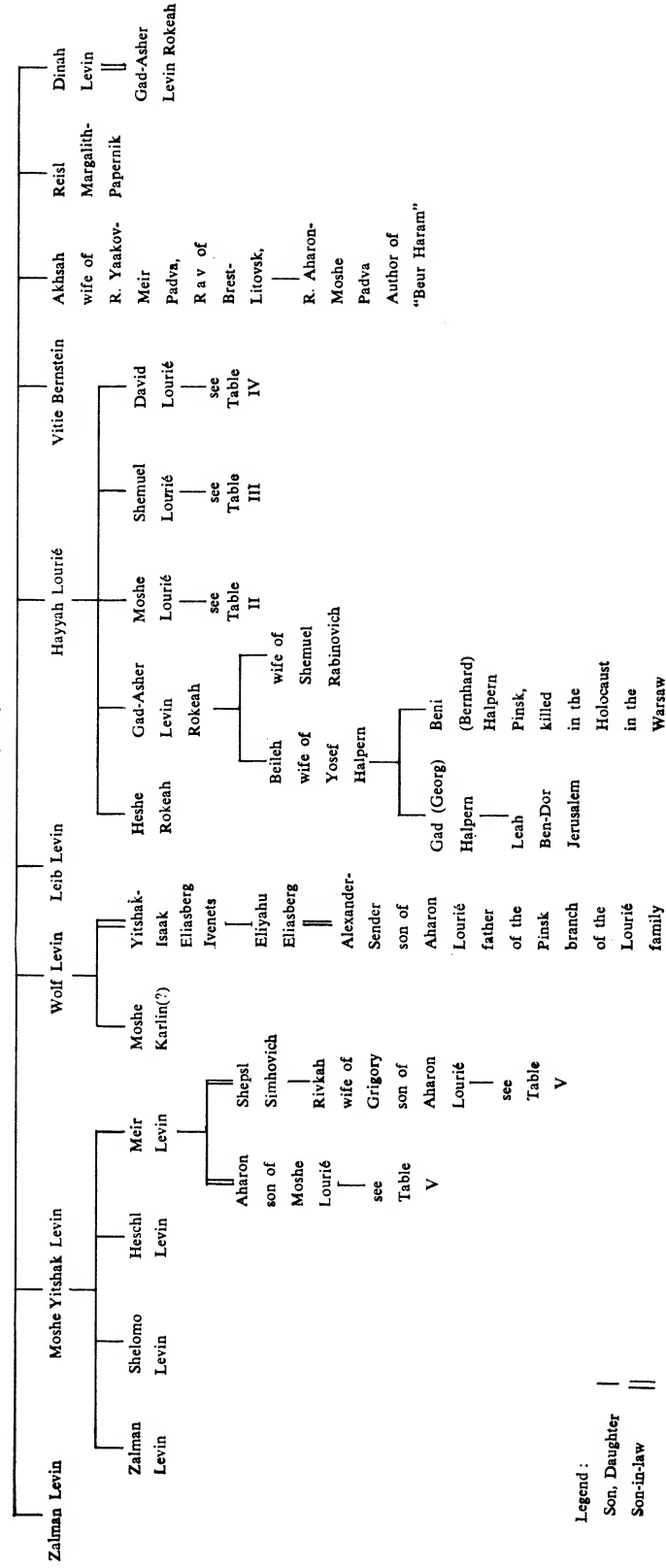
Year	Founder	Enterprise
Before 1899	Grigory Lourié	Bank.
Before 1899	Idel and Sam. D. Lourié	Amalgamation of the banks of Idel and Shemuel, son of David Lourié ("The Rovno Bureau").
1901	Aharon Lourié	Halvaah ve-Hisakhon Bank.
c. 1905	Grigory Lourié	Chalk-manufacture works.
1919	Beni Halpern	Re-established the match factory, after the war.
1921	"The Brothers L. and Al. Lourié"	Re-established the match factory, after the war.
1923	Beni Halpern	Rebuilt the match factory after the fire.
1924	id.	One of the founders of the Commercial and Industrial Bank.
1924	Yaakov Eliasberg	One of the founders of the Commercial and Industrial Bank.

GENEALOGICAL TABLES

TABLE I
Shaul Karlner

Moshe

Shaul Karlner (Levin)



Legend :

Son, Daughter
Son-in-law

TABLE II
Moshe, son of Aharon and Hayyah Lourié

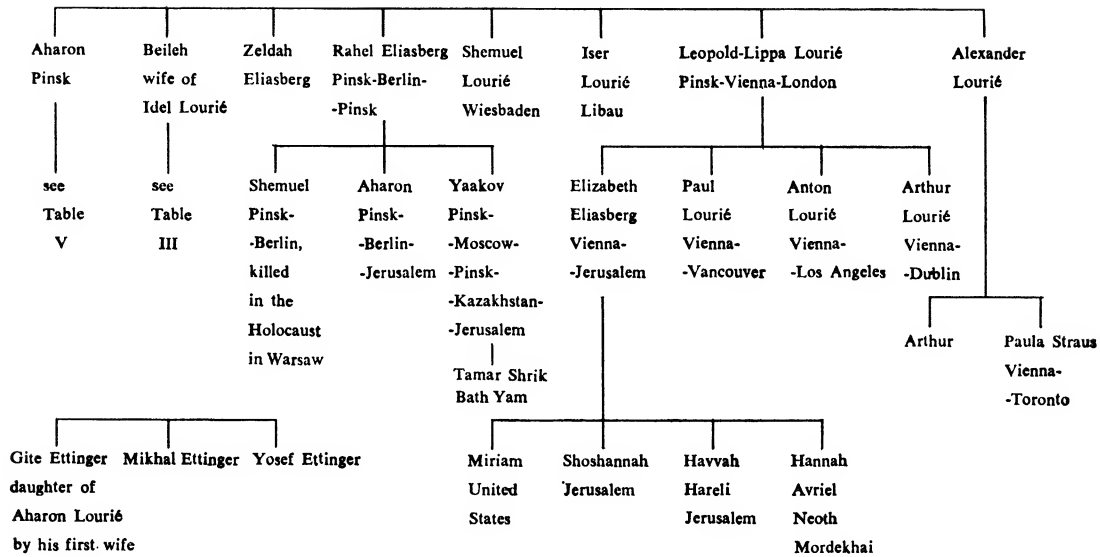


TABLE III
Shemuel, son of Aharon and Hayyah Lourié

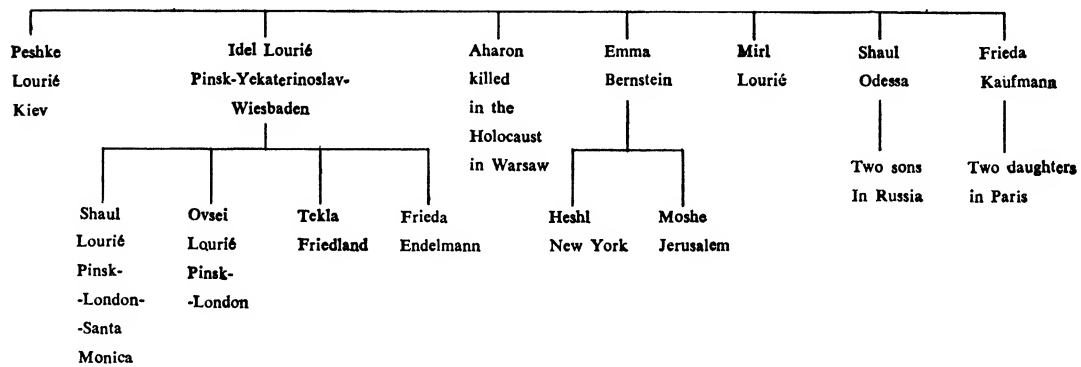


TABLE IV
David, son of Aharon and Hayyah Lourié

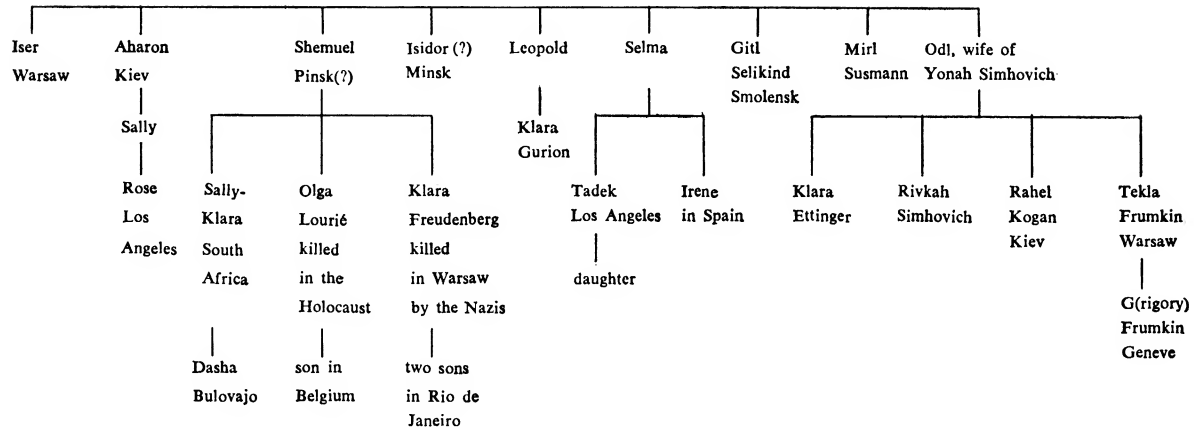


TABLE V
Aharon, son of Moshe Lourié

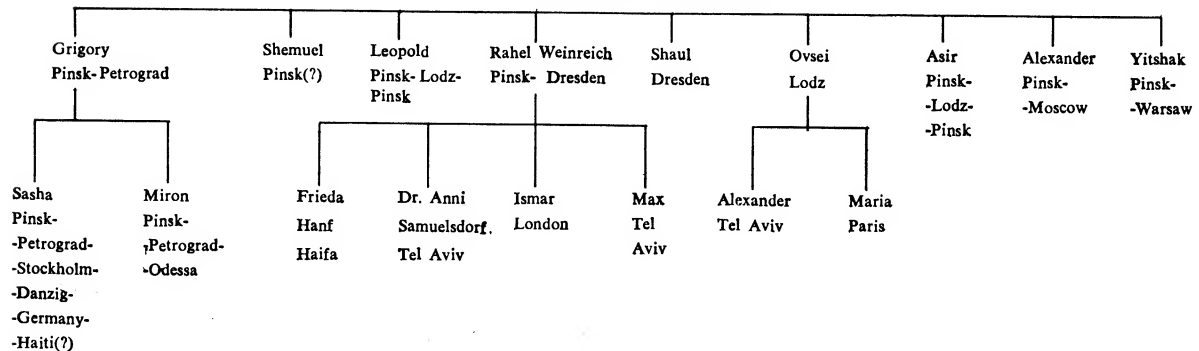


TABLE VI

Marriage between descendants of the brothers
Shemuel and David, sons of Aharon and
Hayyah Lourié

Descendants of Shemuel Lourié

1. Peshke (Pauline)
2. Aharon (killed in Warsaw)
3. Mirl

Descendants of David Lourié

- Aharon (Kiev)
- Olga, granddaughter of David Lourié (killed in Warsaw)
- Leopold

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NOTES ON THE TRANSLITERATION

The transliteration of Hebrew names and words in this monograph follows the Sephardi pronunciation, and is based on the phonetic method employed in scholarly works. Special note should be taken of the following conventions:

Hebrew *beth* with *dagesh* is represented by *b*.

„ *beth* without *dagesh* is represented by *v*
(e.g., *Avraham*).

„ *heth* is represented by *h* (e.g. *hasiduth*).

„ *kaf* without *dagesh* is represented by *kh*
(e.g. *Barukh*).

„ *peh* without *dagesh* is represented by *f*
(e.g., *sefer*).

„ *tav* with *dagesh* is represented by *t*
(e.g. *toledoth*).

„ *tav* without *dagesh* is represented by *th*
(e.g. *toledoth*).

„ *tsaddi* is represented by *ts* (e.g. *tsaddik*).

The *dagesh forte* is represented by a doubled letter (except in the words *mithnaged*, *mithnagdim*).

The *sheva mobile* is represented by *e*.

Proper names from the Old Testament have been written as spelt in the Revised Standard Version of the English Bible.

Russian place names appear in the text according to their usual Jewish pronunciation. Both these place names and the names of Russian writers, books and articles have been transliterated phonetically for the convenience of the reader. Note should be taken of the following ligatures:

kh as in Scottish *loch* (e.g., *Lakhovich*).

ch „ „ *church* (e.g., *Lakhovich*).

sh „ „ *bush* (e.g., *Shneur*).

zh „ „ *pleasure* (e.g., *Zhitomir*).

The titles of books and articles written in Hebrew, Yiddish and Russian appear in the text only in transliteration. A translation has been added in the Bibliography.

The author's explanatory additions to the text of original documents and to Hebrew terms have been placed in square brackets, thus []. Additions or variants forming part of the original text appear in ordinary brackets, thus ().

FOREWORD BY SIMON DUBNOW

There was a period in Jewish historiography when hasidism was written about with partisan passion, the question debated being whether the movement was beneficial or harmful to the development of Judaism. Scholars were divided into an anti-hasidic and a pro-hasidic school, and even in our time some writers have tried to continue this controversy. Today, however, we have reached the point at which dogmatism is giving way to a historical approach, and partisan argumentation is being replaced by objective scientific research into the nature and interconnection of the events.

Now that we possess a general history of hasidism in the period of its origin and growth, the time has come for more detailed individual studies on this topic—monographs on various schools of thought within hasidism and their founders, or on dynasties of *Tsaddikim* which had an effect on the Jewish masses in various countries.

One excellent monograph of this kind that has come to my notice is Dr. Zeev Rabinowitsch's book on the Karlin hasidic dynasty. The very great importance of this family of *Tsaddikim* lies not so much in the extent of its influence, as in the fact that its origins go back to the first period of the hasidic movement—to the period of the Great *Maggid*, whose disciple, R. Aharon 'the Great' of Karlin, founded the first 'sect' of hasidism in Lithuania, and thereby set off the first polemical attack on hasidism by the *Gaon*, R. Eliyahu of Vilna. By discovering new source-material relating to this important chapter of history or new combinations of old material, the author has succeeded in presenting us with a complete history of the dynasty from its beginnings to the present day. For this he has earned the gratitude of all lovers of Jewish history, including myself.

Berlin, *Nisan* 1933.

Simon Dubnow

AUTHOR'S NOTE

When I found the 'holy writings' in the 'court' of the Karlin dynasty in Stolin, i.e., 'The Stolin *genizah*', and made this collection the basis of my research into Karlin hasidism, the cradle of the whole Lithuanian movement, I sent the manuscript to the distinguished

Jewish historian, Simon Dubnow, who was at that time writing his book *Toledoth ha-Hasiduth* (The History of Hasidism). It was Dubnow that urged me to publish my research, and he was even good enough to write a foreword to it.

KARLIN HASIDISM

A. R. Aharon the Great (1765–1772)

History willed that Karlin, a suburb of Pinsk, should be the scene of the rise of hasidism in Lithuania, the movement's centre in the early days, and one of the main causes of the mithnaged attack on hasidism.

After the death of the Besht, his disciple and successor, R. Dov Baer, the Great *Maggid*, established a new centre for the movement in the small town of Mezerich, in Volhynia. From Volhynia, which lay to the north of Podolia, R. Baer was able to extend his influence over Lithuania and White Russia. The personality of the Great *Maggid*, his efforts to base hasidism on the historical tradition of Judaism, and apparently also his organisational talents, compelled the *Rabbanim*, particularly in Lithuania, to pay serious attention to the new movement. For Lithuania, we have two different pieces of information on this subject, one from hasidic sources and the other of mithnaged provenance; and, in addition there is the testimony of Solomon Maimon.

In the well-known collection of mithnaged writings, *Zimrath Am ha-Arets*,¹ there is a letter from the mithnaged preacher, R. David of Makov, to R. Shelomo-Zalman, the *Av Beth-Din* [Head of the Rabbinical Court] of the community of Nashelsk. In this letter it is stated that the *Rosh Yeshivah* [Head of the Talmudic School] and the *Av Beth-Din* in Pinsk, R. Rafael Hacohen, paid a visit to the Great *Maggid* of Mezerich, in order to become acquainted with both the man and his doctrine.² On his return, he made a report to the *Gaon* of Vilna. To the *Gaon's* question 'Is he [sc. R. Baer] a scholar?' R. Rafael answered 'No.' When the *Gaon* asked R. Rafael about R. Baer's knowledge of *Kabbalah*, he replied: 'I do not know,

since I myself am not conversant with this lore. I can only judge his knowledge of hidden doctrine from his knowledge of revealed teaching [i.e., *Gemara*].' Further on in his letter, R. David of Makov writes that in the year 1765–1766 R. Baer became widely known in the Jewish world, and *Rabbanim* and talmudic scholars began flocking to him to study hasidic doctrine under his instruction. Hence, it may be assumed that in this year (1765–1766) the penetration of hasidism into Lithuania was already in process. Among R. Baer's disciples we find the kabbalist and talmudic scholar, R. Pinhas Horowitz (the author of the work *Haftaah*), who was at that time a *Rav* in the small Lithuanian town of Lakhovich. In the introduction to the book *Maggid Devarav le-Yaakov* by 'R. Dov-Baer ... of the holy community of Mezerich,' mention is made of 'the learned, pious and humble aged *Rav*, our Teacher R. Zeev-Wolf of the holy community of Greater Horodno [Grodno] in the Province of Lithuania.' This R. Zeev-Wolf was a disciple of the Great *Maggid*, and wrote down his master's teachings. R. Baer's great success is also attributed to the emissaries whom



R. Rafael Hacohen—*Rav* of Pinsk
(Toysend Jahr Pinsk, p. 255)

¹ Dubnow, *Toledoth ha-Hasiduth*, p. 463 ff., Tel Aviv 1932.

² R. Rafael Hacohen, later *Rav* in Hamburg, was one of the greatest talmudists of his time and author of numerous rabbinic works; see: S.M. Rabinowitsch, 'Al Pinsk, Karlin ve-Yoshveihen', *Talpiyoth*, Pt. *Kehiloth Yaakov*, p. 8 ff., Berdichev 1895, and other sources.

he sent out to every Jewish community, including those in Lithuania.

Solomon Maimon, himself a Lithuanian Jew—from Nesvizh, near Slutsk—has the following to say about these emissaries in his autobiography³: 'Its leaders [sc. of hasidism] sent emissaries to every place to preach the new doctrine and gain adherents to it... It once happened that a young man, who had already joined this society and had had the privilege of speaking in person to its leaders, passed through the town where I was living... His words so fired my imagination that I was completely carried away. Seized by an overwhelming desire to attain to true happiness by becoming a member of this noble society of men, I resolved to go to the town of M.[ezerich] where the Rebbe B.[aer] was living.' The events described here belong to the middle of the 1760s, and there must no doubt have been many young Lithuanian Jews who at that time made their way to Mezerich, like Solomon Maimon, to hear 'the new doctrine' there. Among them was the future founder of the Karlin branch of Hasidism, R. Aharon, known to the hasidim as 'R. Aharon the Great,' who became one of the Great *Maggid's* most distinguished disciples.

R. Aharon of Karlin was born in 1736.⁴ His father, R. Yaakov, was a native of the small town of Yanovo (close to Pinsk) who earned a meagre livelihood as the *shamash* [caretaker and usher] of a *beth midrash* [house of prayer and study].⁵ At about the

³ *Salomon Maimons Lebensgeschichte*, pp. 188, 198, 201 ff. Munich 1911. The above-mentioned book, *Maggid Devarav le-Yaakov* (Lublin 1927 and many other printings), is the original source for the teaching of the Great *Maggid*.

⁴ A. E. Shapiro, *Mishnath Hakhamim*, p. 39, Jerusalem 1934.

⁵ Y. M. Kleinbaum, *Shema Shelomo*, Pt. II, p. 25, Petrokov 1928. Karlin, which was later incorporated in Pinsk, gained its communal independence and kept it almost until the Nazi Holocaust. Cf., Rabinowitsch, 'Al Pinsk, Karlin ve-Yoshveihen,' p. 15; R. Mahler, *Toledoth ha-Yehudim be-Polin*, p. 394, Merhavyah 1946; *Toyzend Yor Pinsk*, ed. Hofman, p. 56 ff., New York 1941.

Hasidic tradition relates, that R. Aharon the Great had an uncle in Karlin, R. Manele, who also found his way to the Great *Maggid*, and that it was this uncle that influenced R. Aharon to go to Mezerich. M.H. Kleinman, *Zikhron la-Rishonim*, p. 28, Petrokov 1912; A. Eizen, 'R. Aharon ha-Gadol,' *Ha-Modia* (daily paper), 6.X.1954, Jerusalem; Y. Yaakov, *Ha-Maggid mi-Mezerich*, pp. 62–64, 143–144, Benei Berak 1972.

same time as the Pinsk *Av Beth-Din*, R. Rafael Hachohen, returned disappointed from Mezerich, the young man from the Pinsk suburb of Karlin was so attracted to R. Baer's doctrine that he became not only the *Maggid's* devoted disciple, but also one of the main propagators of his teachings. He travelled regularly through the small Lithuanian towns preaching hasidism, as he later wrote of himself in his will: 'He used to admonish the masses with a sternness that concealed an inner love, in order to bring all Jews closer to their heavenly Father.' Hence he came to be popularly known as 'the admonisher.'⁶ R. Aharon was the one and only hasidic Rebbe in Lithuania at that time. R. Mendel of Vitebsk and R. Yisrael of Polotsk were mainly active in White Russia, even though the town of Minsk where R. Mendel then lived was within the borders of 'the Province of Lithuania'; and R. Shneur-Zalman does not appear on the scene until about 1781. R. Aharon was thus the pioneer of hasidism in Lithuania.

So it was that Karlin became the centre of the hasidic movement in Lithuania, particularly in that part of it known as 'Polesia.' In the years 1770–1772 there were Karlin hasidim in Vilna and the other Lithuanian towns,⁷ as we know from several contemporary references to their existence. Thus, for example, Solomon Maimon writes in his autobiography: 'These people [sc. the hasidim] used to make pilgrimages to K.[arlin], M.[ezerich], and other "holy" places where the leaders, teachers, and great lights of this sect lived. Young men would leave their parents, wives, and small children and travel in groups to visit these great "Rebbes" and to receive instruction from them in the new doctrine.'⁸ Karlin is also described as a hasidic centre by Grégoire.⁹ The full extent of R. Aharon's

⁶ It is possible that the young hasidic preacher described by Salomon Maimon (*Lebensgeschichte*, p. 205, note) might be R. Aharon, despite the difference between the age of the preacher, as conjectured by Maimon (22), and that of R. Aharon who was then about 30. See below the comments added by R. Aharon to the *pinukas* of Maimon's birthplace, Nesvizh. R. Aharon continued to be referred to as 'the admonisher' for more than a hundred years after his death. See: Had min Havraya, 'Hithgalluth ha-Yenuka be-Stolin,' *Ha-Shahar*, Vol. VI, p. 31, Vienna 1875.

⁷ 'Zemir Aritsim ve-Harvoth Tsurim,' published by Dubnow, *Chassidiana*, supplement to *He-Avar*, Vol. II, pp. 22, 23, 25, Petrograd 1918.

⁸ Salomon Maimon, *op. cit.*, p. 188.

⁹ 'Chassidim appelés aussi *Carolins* en Lithuania, du

influence, not only in Karlin, but also in the whole surrounding district, can be inferred from two postscripts added by him in the communal *pinkas* of Nesvitzh, which was found among the 'holy writings' of the Karlin *Tsaddikim*.¹⁰ Preserved in these Karlin hasidic archives (the Stolin *genizah*) are several pages from the above *pinkas*, containing the resolutions passed by the heads of the *kahal* in the matter of communal taxes. Appended to the resolutions are two postscripts by R. Aharon, indicating his assent to the resolutions passed. From internal evidence it is clear that both the resolutions and the postscripts belong to the year 1769.¹¹

The resolutions in the Nesvitzh *pinkas* are worded as follows:

'These are the ordinances which were enacted . . . by the drafting committee chosen . . . together with the leaders of the assembly, on Friday . . . 10th *Adar* I, 1769.

nom d'un village nommé Carolin non loin de Pinsko, ou la secte a pris naissance;' cited by Graetz, *Geschichte der Juden*, Vol XI, p. 557, Leipzig 1900.

In connection with the rise of Karlin hasidism, mention should be made of the words spoken, according to hasidic tradition, by the Karlin Rebbe, R. Yisrael of Stolin, before his death in 1921: 'Our hasidism is one hundred and sixty years old.' According to this statement, Karlin hasidism came into being in the early sixties of the eighteenth century. A. Hausman, *Divrei Aharon*, p. 119, Jerusalem 1964.

¹⁰ In my search for these writings I was aided by the teacher David-Tsevi Bakhlinski and his assistant Shuchman, both of whom apparently died martyrs' deaths in the Nazi Holocaust. The archives of the Karlin *Tsaddikim* were housed in the cellar of the old Rebbe's residence (the 'court') in Stolin—this is the Stolin *genizah*. They comprised correspondence of the Karlin *Tsaddikim* and of the *Tsaddikim* of other dynasties; public appeals; *pinkasim*; a pledge of loyalty [*shetar hithkashruth*] signed in 1575 in Safed by disciples of R. Yitshak Luria and R. Hayyim Vital; a manuscript of *Sefer ha-Tsoref*, written by the Shabbatean, R. Yehoshua-Heshel Tsoref, and other writings. Cf., W. Z. Rabinowitsch, 'Min ha-Genizah ha-Stolinaith,' *Zion*, 5th year, pp. 125–132, 244–247, Jerusalem 1940; *Idem*, 'Al "Sefer ha-Tsoref,"' *Zion*, 6th year, pp. 80–84, Jerusalem 1941; and below, the last paragraph of this monograph.

¹¹ R. Aharon's postscripts are published in part by Dubnow, *Toledoth ha-Hasiduth*, p. 478. Cf., also: Ben-zion Dinur, *Be-Mifneh ha-Doroth*, pp. 144–146, Jerusalem 1955; I. Halpern, 'Yahaso shel R. Aharon ha-Gadol mi-Karlin klappei Mishtar ha-Kehilloth,' *Zion*, 22nd year, p. 86 ff., Jerusalem 1957.

'In the ordinances concerning the meat tax [*ko-robka*] which were drawn up in the year 1765 there are several seeming iniquities to be put right. Moreover, there is even a contradiction, and this must be corrected. But it is not expressly stated that the heads of the *kahal* are empowered to amend the meat-tax ordinances. Therefore, we have confined ourselves to making only this amendment—that in future neither the heads of the *kahal* nor the leaders of the assembly may impose a double meat-tax, but only a single one. If the money [raised does not] suffice for the needs of the community, then everything shall be done [in conformity with the amendment] and with the ordinances mentioned below, which the heads of the *kahal* will have to make in addition to the meat-tax of 1765, but without doubling it.'

The drafters of the enactments then go on to explain how the communal tax was to be collected. This was apparently a joint property-and-income tax which all the Jews had to pay. After the signatures of the *Rabbanim* of Kletsk and Slutsk [?], we find the following two postscripts by R. Aharon:

I. 'After I have beheld the poverty of our Jewish people, how can I hold my peace, when I have seen the bitter plight of the poor of Israel and heard the cry which they utter in their great pain, and I am concerned that the leaders of the community should not go astray (Heaven forbid!) in this bitter iniquity of robbing the poor? Wherefore an assembly was convened and chose some of its number to draw up enactments to deliver the oppressed poor, and they apparently formulated these enactments according to their own opinion. The whole assembly then solemnly undertook to confirm and observe every detail of the enactments . . . I therefore decree that whosoever shall nullify these enactments and infringe the rights of the poor shall be utterly excommunicated and accursed. Seeing that I am authorised by our Teacher . . . the learned Sage of the whole *golah* [diaspora], the *Maggid* of the holy community of Mezerich, to remove any stumbling block from the path of the children of Israel as far as my power extends, even to the proclaiming of a *herem* [ban]. Wherefore my advice is not to breach the fence [erected round the Law] by the Sages, so as not to be caught (Heaven forbid!) in the trap [of sin]. He that hearkens [to this decree] will be blessed with every good. Such are the words of Aharon, the son of our Teacher R. Yaakov (of blessed memory) of Karlin.'

II. 'I hereby require that it be recorded as my solemn decree that, on pain of excommunication, no meat-tax shall be collected from *melammedim* [children's teachers], i.e., deducted from their tuition fees. Moreover, I hereby decree, under pain of excommunication, that no one shall lease double the meat-tax of the year [5]525 [=1765] as registered there, without the agreement of the drafters of the enactments whose signatures appear on the previous page, p. 160, or of all the inhabitants of the city, all the poor and penniless listed in the meat-tax register. Even a single one of the taxpayers can prevent [a double meat-tax]. If someone should innocently ask the reason for the enactment [not to permit a double meat-tax], the answer is that, according to the law of our sacred Torah, no meat-tax at all is permitted. Those who ask questions like this in order to strip the poor of Israel of their last penny are most certainly of the seed of the Gibeonites... Whosoever shall seek to nullify the enactments signed on the foregoing page is hereby placed under the ban and excommunicated from all the communities of Israel. But he that hearkens unto them shall be blessed with every good, for whoever is merciful to his fellow-creatures shall receive mercy from Heaven. Such are the words of Aharon of Karlin.'

The strong wording of R. Aharon's postscripts testifies to the powerfulness of his position and to his profound concern for the poor. At this time, the *kahal's* jurisdiction over the Jewish community was still legally recognised by the secular power, and there was bitter antagonism between the leaders of the *kahal* and the masses, even to the extent of open conflict. R. Aharon, as we see from the postscripts, fearlessly takes the side of the poorer classes and in doing so evidently acts as an influential leader. Apparently then, by about 1769 the hasidic movement had already gained support in Lithuania, too. The first clash with the *mithnagdim* (1772) had not yet occurred, otherwise R. Aharon would not have been bold enough or strong enough to write in the *pinkas* of another Lithuanian town his own opinions and instructions about the resolutions passed by an assembly of *Rabbanim* and *kahal* leaders. R. Aharon's assertion, 'I am authorised by our Teacher... the learned Sage of the whole *golah*, the *Maggid* of the holy community of Mezerich,' shows that R. Baer was not only well known but was also apparently recognised as an authority even by the Jews of Lithuania.

This was the period of the hasidic movement's taking root and first flowering in Lithuania. However, on account of R. Aharon's untimely death, and as a result of the persecutions of the hasidim which began at that time (1772), the importance of Karlin for hasidism in those years was forgotten.

Karlin's sister town, Pinsk, was a stronghold of rabbinism. It was here that the first shots in the war against hasidism were fired, and they were aimed principally at R. Aharon. This much is evident from the following letter, found in the Stolin *genizah*, from R. Baer of Mezerich to R. Eliezer Halevi, a *Moreh-Tsedek* [rabbinical judge] in Pinsk and author of several homiletical works,¹² and to R. Hayyim, also of Pinsk. The text runs as follows:¹³

'Greetings to my dear friend, the learned and venerable *Rav* Eliezer Halevi, and to his compeer the learned and renowned *Rav*, the Teacher R. Hayyim. I write to urge you to live together in peace and to work in partnership and harmony with our distinguished and renowned friend, R. Aharon. It is well known that his guidance is pleasing to God (?). Why, then, should you turn away [from him]? What wrong, Heaven forbid, has been found [in his conduct] that provides any ground or doubt? Set aside evil thoughts, that there may be no schism between you (Heaven forbid!). Let the previous good relations be restored, and let not this matter be unimportant to you. Then you will be granted peace from the Lord of peace, and from me, your friend and well-wisher, Dov-Baer, the son of R. Avraham of blessed memory.

'These words are also addressed to the learned scholar, the Teacher R. Shelomo, that he should strive in his wisdom to establish peace in your camp.'

The letter bears no date, but it was most probably written between 1769 and 1772 and is thus evidence of the first persecutions of the Karlin hasidim led by R. Aharon. It also shows that R. Baer, who here takes his disciple, R. Aharon, under his protection, was well known in Lithuania and felt sufficiently sure of his

¹² *Siah ha-Sadeh*, Shklov 1787; *Reiah ha-Sadeh*, Shklov 1795. R. Eliezer, son of R. Meir Halevi, was formerly *Av Beth-Din* in Homsk (a small town near Pinsk) and afterwards '*Rav* of the synagogue and *Moreh-Tsedek* of the holy community of Pinsk.' See: A. Yaari, '*Ha-Defus ha-Ivri bi-Shklov*,' *Kiryath Sefer*, Vol. XXII, p. 63, Jerusalem 1945.

¹³ The letter is published by Dubnow, *Toledoth ha-Hasiduth*, p. 477 and by Kleinbaum, *Shema Shelomo*, Pt. II, p. 21.

own authority to intervene with a *Moreh-Tsedek* in Pinsk. The R. Shelomo mentioned in this letter is R. Shelomo of Karlin, one of the outstanding disciples of the Great *Maggid*, a disciple and associate of R. Aharon and subsequently his successor as Rebbe. R. Shelomo was at that time living with R. Aharon in Karlin and was his chief aide in the campaign to propagate the hasidic doctrine among the Jewish masses.

According to hasidic sources, at this same time another of R. Baer of Mezerich's outstanding disciples, R. Levi-Yitshak (later known as R. Levi-Yitshak of Berdichev) was officiating as *Rav* in Pinsk. These sources state that, in 1771, R. Levi-Yitshak was elected the *Av Beth-Din* and *Rosh Yeshivah* of Pinsk.¹⁴ However, from his written approvals to the volumes *Hovath ha-Levavoth* (1772) and *Erkhei ha-Kinnuyim* (1775) we learn that, in those years, R. Levi-Yitshak was in fact still officiating as *Rav* in Zhelikhov.¹⁵ Nor does hasidic literature contain any historical material, or even legendary traditions, about the relations between R. Aharon and R. Levi-Yitshak in Karlin or Pinsk. We do know that a bitter dispute broke out between R. Levi-Yitshak and the mithnaged population of Pinsk, which resulted in R. Levi-Yitshak's deposition from the office of *Rav* and his expulsion from Pinsk. But this event occurred after the death of R. Aharon.¹⁶

While in Lithuania the attacks on hasidism were being directed against individual adherents of the movement,¹⁷ the first assembly of the communal re-

presentatives and *Rabbanim* of neighbouring White Russia was convened in Shklov, in White Russia. This assembly issued the first public anti-hasidic proclamation drawing the attention of the communal leaders, and in particular of the *Gaon* of Vilna, to the danger in the new movement.¹⁸ From a letter written by R. Shneur-Zalman of Ladi to R. Avraham of Kalisk (Kolishki, in White Russia) we learn that this assembly took place in the winter of 1771-1772.¹⁹ It was called primarily on account of the strange conduct of R. Avraham of Kalisk, on his return home from the *beth midrash* of Mezerich. His strange antics while praying ('turning repeated somersaults,' and the like) and his contemptuous and abusive attitude to talmudic scholars outraged not only the *Rabbanim* but even the Great *Maggid* himself. R. Avraham and his followers were popularly known as the *Talk* [=530] hasidim, with reference to the year 5530 [=1769-1770], when they first made their appearance in Kalisk. The above-mentioned letter by R. Shneur-Zalman goes on to state that in the ensuing public debate between the communal leaders and the *Maggid's* disciples, R. Avraham of Kalisk was obliged to apologise. The Shklov assembly of 1771 decided to persecute the hasidim, and appealed to the *Gaon* of Vilna for his support.²⁰

In spite of the persecutions and the general atmosphere of hatred all around them, the Karlin hasidim, led by R. Aharon, continued their vigorous propagation of hasidic doctrine among the Jews of Lithuania. The collection of anti-hasidic writings known as *Zemir Aritsim ve-Harvoth Tsurim*, published in 1772,

not one of the mithnagdim but, on the contrary, closely connected with hasidism in Pinsk and with the Great *Maggid* of Mezerich and a friend of R. Aharon and R. Shelomo of Karlin.

With regard to the problem of the date of the penetration of hasidism into Lithuania, v. Tishby's view: '*Ha-Rayon ha-Meshihi ve-ha-Megammoth ha-Meshihiyoth bi-Tsemihath ha-Hasiduth*,' *Zion*, 32nd year, p. 23, Jerusalem 1967; and cf., *ibid.* (pp. 16-24) on R. Shmuel the son of R. Eliezer of Kalvariya and his book *Darkhei Noam*.

¹⁸ '*Zemir Aritsim ve-Harvoth Tsurim*,' published by Dubnow, *op. cit.*, pp. 24, 25; Heilman, *op. cit.*, p. 85.

¹⁹ Heilman, *op. cit.*, p. 85.

²⁰ There is a legend among hasidim that in the Shklov debate the hasidim were represented by R. Aharon the Great, but there is no historical substantiation for this. On the name '*Talk hasidim*' see: D. T. Hilman, *Iggeroth Baal ha-Tanya*, p. 156 ff., Jerusalem 1953; Heilman, *op. cit.*, Pt. I, p. 8, n. 1.

¹⁴ M. Teitelbaum, *Ha-Rav mi-Ladi u-Miflegeth Habad*, Pt. I, p. 23, n. 2, Warsaw 1910; H. M. Heilman, *Beth Rabbi*, Pt. I, p. 8, n. 4 and p. 125, Berdichev 1903.

¹⁵ H. Lieberman, '*Hearoth Bibliografiyoth*,' *Sefer ha-Yovel le-Alexander Marx*, p. 15 ff., New York 1943.

¹⁶ Cf. *infr.* Similarly we find no historical data in hasidic literature on the relations between R. Aharon and R. Tsevi, son of the Besht, who lived in Pinsk and died and was buried there.

¹⁷ See above the letter of the Great *Maggid* of Mezerich to the Pinsk *Moreh-Tsedek* R. Eliezer Halevi.

Nadav, in his study *Toledoth Kehillath Pinsk 1506-1880* (*Pinsk*, Vol. I, Pt. I, pp. 187-193, edited by W. Z. Rabinowitsch, Tel Aviv 1973), holds that R. Eliezer, the son of R. Meir Halevi—whom the Great *Maggid* of Mezerich, R. Baer, requests in his letter 'to live together in peace and to work in partnership and harmony with our distinguished and renowned friend, R. Aharon... Why, then, should you turn away [from him]?... Set aside evil thoughts, that there be no schism between you'—was, at the time when this letter was written,

gives us a picture of contemporary hasidism as seen by the *mithnagdim*. In this volume the hasidim are referred to as 'Karliners': 'Lament for the hasidim of this time who are called Mezerichers and Karliners.'²¹ The hasidim in Vilna were also called 'Karliners': 'It was resolved to drive out and scatter forthwith the Karliner *minyān* [in Vilna].'²² We also read that 'in these times we have heard to our sore amazement of the flourishing of the wicked in the Province of Lithuania, how they have multiplied and become very strong... And because of our many transgressions the plague has spread to every province, and to every city.'²³ The hasidim formed their own *minyanim* [prayer quorums], so as to be able to follow the Sephardi form of prayer and to pray with their customary noisy fervour. They distributed large numbers of broadsheets containing the tenets of hasidism, and perhaps also propaganda letters from R. Aharon, who was not permitted to preach the hasidic doctrine publicly and freely, like his comrades in the south. These sheets, however, have not been preserved, since the *mithnagdim*, as is clear from their own broadsheets, used to burn all hasidic writings that they could lay hands on.²⁴

'It was already the custom, in those early days, for a hasidic leader to wear white garments on Sabbaths and Festivals.'²⁵ His disciples would assemble in his home—so hasidic tradition relates—for the 'third meal' [eaten on the Sabbath in the late afternoon] and the *melaveh malkah* [gathering of hasidim on the Sabbath night to eat and to sing liturgical songs together]. Then the Rebbe would deliver a discourse, and his assembled followers would sing *zemiroth* [liturgical poems]. According to the tradition of the Karlin hasidim, these customs were already practised by R. Aharon the Great. These, then, would be the first signs of tsaddikism. However, in the actual writ-

ings of R. Aharon the Great—his letter and will—there is no allusion to any such cult of the *Tsaddik*.

The tendency of the hasidim to segregate themselves from the rest of the community greatly alarmed the Lithuanian communal leaders and *Rabbanim*, who feared the appearance of a new messianic movement. The hasidic demand that ritual slaughtering be performed with 'polished knives' also aroused great indignation. In the larger cities—Vilna, Minsk and Shklov—the hasidim began to be severely harassed. R. Mendel of Vitebsk, who was then living in Minsk, travelled to Vilna in an attempt to see the *Gaon*, R. Eliyahu, but was not received by him.²⁶ Karlin is not mentioned in contemporary documents, even though in Karlin R. Aharon had his own house of prayer and hasidic community, and his followers flocked to him from the whole surrounding district.²⁷ His most important disciples in those days were his friend and future successor, R. Shelomo of Karlin, and R. Hayyim-Heikel of Amdur.²⁸ They were both drawn to hasidism through the influence of R. Aharon and subsequently became disciples of the Great *Maggid*.

The increasing success of hasidism in Lithuania brought home to the leaders of Lithuanian Jewry the alarming realisation that what they were confronted with was not just a series of isolated incidents, but a large-scale popular movement. After the Passover Festival in 1772 the first *herem* against the hasidim was proclaimed, on the authority of the *Gaon* of Vilna, in every *beth midrash* and synagogue in Vilna. The prayer-houses of the hasidim were forcibly closed, their preachers assaulted, and their writings burnt.²⁹ Moreover, the formation of new hasidic groups was proclaimed unlawful. The Vilna community further published a manifesto, signed by the *Gaon*, calling on the four other principal Lithuanian communities (Pinsk, Grodno, Brest-Litovsk, Slutsk) and on those of White Russia (Shklov and Minsk) to outlaw the hasidim, as the Vilna community had done, and to persecute them relentlessly.³⁰

At the very time when the Vilna hasidim were be-

²¹ '*Zemir Aritsim ve-Harvoth Tsurim*,' in Dubnow, *op. cit.*, p. 25.

²² *Ibid.*

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 21, 22.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 11 ff. and p. 26.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 14; *Maimons Lebensgeschichte*, p. 203. The *Tsaddik* R. Aharon the Second of Karlin (the grandson of R. Aharon the Great) used to relate the following hasidic tradition: 'My revered Grandfather... used to set on the table in front of his holy teacher [sc. R. Baer] twelve *haloth* [round loaves] at every meal of the holy Sabbath' (*Beth Aharon*, by R. Aharon of Karlin, p. 289, Brody 1875).

²⁶ '*Zemir Aritsim ve-Harvoth Tsurim*,' *ibid.*, pp. 10, 24, 25 ff.; Dubnow, *Toledoth ha-Hasiduth*, p. 113, n. 4.

²⁷ See above the account by Maimon of pilgrimages to the *Tsaddik*.

²⁸ Cf. W. Z. Rabinowitsch, *Lithuanian Hasidism*, Chap. 3, p. 121–149, London 1970.

²⁹ '*Zemir Aritsim ve-Harvoth Tsurim*,' *ibid.*, p. 11 ff.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 12 ff., 21 ff.

ing subjected to persecution and excommunication,³¹ there occurred in Karlin an event which was to have a great effect on the future development of Karlin hasidism and of Lithuanian hasidism in general. On the fourth intermediate day of Passover, 19th *Nisan*, 1772, R. Aharon the Great died suddenly in Karlin, at the early age of thirty-six. The Karlin hasidism thus found themselves bereft of their Teacher and Rebbe, while the hasidic movement as a whole lost one of its most important leaders and the Great *Maggid* one of his most loyal and active disciples. 'The *Tsaddik*, R. Aharon the Great, was devoured by the flame of piety that burnt in him,' said the hasidim to one another.³²

R. Aharon the Great's personality is revealed in his 'Exhortations,' his letter and his will,³³ as well as in sayings and thoughts attributed to him and legends told about him.³⁴ The Besht, as is reported, had based his doctrine on three loves. Every one of his disciples subsequently concentrated all his efforts and aspirations on one of these three: to R. Levi-Yitshak of Berdichev the most important principle was the love of Israel; for R. Shneur-Zalman of Ladi, the founder of the *Habad* school of hasidism, it was love of the *Torah*; and for R. Aharon the Great it was the love of the Creator—'bringing Israel closer to their heavenly Father,' as he wrote in his will. R. Aharon's strong sense of religious awe transported him into a state of constant spiritual devotion and mystical ecstasy. According to hasidic tradition, R. Shneur-Zalman of Ladi said of him: 'R. Aharon's fear of the Holy One Blessed Be He was like the fear of a condemned man who stands bound to the stake while a soldier in front of him aims the arrow at him, and he sees the head of the arrow leaving the bow and speeding towards him. Such was his fear in small matters. In great matters, it was beyond all conceiving.' Hasidic

legend further relates that, whenever R. Aharon recited the Song of Songs, there would be a commotion in Heaven and the angels would cease singing their paeans of praise to the Holy One Blessed Be He and gather together to listen to R. Aharon's holy melody. The ecstatic fervour which is still seen to this day in the praying of the Karlin hasidim is said by the hasidim themselves to take its origin from R. Aharon the Great.

R. Aharon demanded that every one of his disciples should 'shut himself up in solitude in a special room for one day of every week and spend the time in fasting, repentance and study of the *Torah*... And if possible, he should shut himself up alone every day. Even without fasting let him take care to withdraw for not less than an hour, and let him make confession to his Creator and entreat His forgiveness.'³⁵ This shows that R. Aharon did not completely shake off the kabbalistic tendency to asceticism. He himself used to fast frequently, though he would warn his disciples against excessive fasting. In a letter to one of his disciples he writes: 'Frequent fasts, ascetic practices, and ritual immersions are a device of the evil impulse to distract you from your study and prayer, to make you pray with a weakened body and a confused mind.'³⁶ To his advice to his disciples to study the volume *Reshith Hokhmah* he adds: 'You shall carry out all that is written in it, except the self-mortifications and fasts prescribed in it, and then it will be well with you.'³⁷ R. Aharon also required of his disciples that they should study the *Aggadah*, a demand that was also alien to the Lithuanian Jew who was primarily interested in the *Halakhah*. In his 'Exhortations' R. Aharon writes: 'Beware of pride and anger even in the performance of a *mitsvah*, still more of dissension (Heaven forbid!), and be particularly careful in this even with one's own family.'³⁸ "'Know Him in all your ways'" means that eating, drinking, sleeping, and sexual intercourse are all to be directed only to the worship of the Creator, blessed be His Name.'³⁹

R. Aharon the Great was the author of the lyrical Sabbath song '*Yah Ekhsof Noam Shabbath*' ['Lord,

³¹ Dubnow, *Toledoth ha-Hasiduth*, p. 114.

³² M. H. Kleinman, *Mazkereth Shem Ha-Gedolim*, p. 7, Petrokov 1908; *Kehal Hasidim*, pp. 53, 54 (no place and date of publication).

³³ *Tsavaah mi-Kethoveth Yad Kodesh... R. Aharon... mi-Karlin... ve-Hanhagoth... mi-Beno... R. Asher... mi-Karlin*, Chernovits, 1849, 1855; *Beth Aharon*, pp. 1, 11, 15–16, 293.

³⁴ On the legends concerning R. Aharon's religious feeling see: Heilman, *op. cit.*, p. 127; M. H. Kleinman, *Zikhron la-Rishonim*, pp. 22–45, Petrokov 1912; *Mazkereth Shem ha-Gedolim*, pp. 6–13; *Kehal Hasidim he-Hadash* passim, Lemberg 1904; [M. Bodek], *Seder ha-Doroth mi-Talmidei ha-Besht*, p. 35 (no place and

date of publication).

³⁵ *Beth Aharon*, p. 1.

³⁶ *Op. cit.*, p. 293.

³⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁸ *Op. cit.*, p. 1.

³⁹ *Ibid.*

I yearn for the Sabbath's delight'], a poem filled with spiritual love and religious longings.

This liturgical poem was sung by the adherents of Karlin hasidism and its offshoots—Lakhovich, Koidanov, Kobrin, Slonim and others—privately in their own homes, or all together on the Sabbath eve and at 'the third meal'.⁴⁰ The Karlin hasidim have about twenty different tunes for his song⁴¹ which is called by them simply *Ha-Zemer* ['the liturgical poem']. One of these tunes has become widely known as *Ha-Niggun ha-Kadosh* ['the holy tune']. There are also hasidic stories about R. Aharon's special customs on *Simhath Torah*.⁴²

In hasidic tradition R. Aharon is described as possessing a keen capacity to distinguish 'between pure and impure.' He could also discern lofty souls in simple Jews and, on the contrary, lay bare the true character of hypocrites. This is why the Great *Maggid* used frequently to send him out 'to purge away impurity'.⁴³ The apocryphal hasidic literature contains various saying and ideas attributed to R. Aharon the Great⁴⁴

⁴⁰ *Op. cit.*, p. 11. The 'Zemer' was subsequently included among the Sabbath songs in several *siddurim* [prayer-books], such as the following: *Beth Yaakov*, compiled by R. Yaakov Emden, p. 318, Warsaw 1881; the collection of Sabbath songs, *Sheloshah Sefarim Niftahim*... ed. by Y. A. L. Oppenheim... p. 60, Petrokov 1910; the Koidanov *siddur*, *Or ha-Yashar*, Vilna 1928; cf. W. Z. Rabinowitsch, *ibid.*, chap. 4, n. 32; the *siddur Zemiroth le-Shabbathoth ve-Yamim Tovim*, published by A.B., Jerusalem 1947.

⁴¹ *Entsiklopediyah Yisraelith* (Eshkol), Vol. I, s.v. *Aharon Ben Yaakov mi-Karlin*, Berlin 1929; A. Ben-Ezra, *Ha-'Yenuka' mi-Stolin*, New York 1951; *Horodets*, edited by A. Ben-Ezra and Y. Zusman, p. 52, New York 1949; M. S. Geshuri, 'Niggunei Karlin u-Stolin,' *Stolin, Sefer Zikkaron*, edited by A. Avatihi and Y. Zakai, p. 167, Tel Aviv 1952.

⁴² Kleinman, *Zikhron la-Rishonim*, p. 28.

⁴³ *Shivhei ha-Besht*, edited by Horodezki, p. 38, Berlin 1922.

⁴⁴ Besides the works listed in n.34, hasidic literature contains many other stories about R. Aharon the Great. There is reason to suspect that the hasidim were not particularly careful in their handing down of the details and mixed up words spoken by R. Aharon the Great with those spoken by one of his descendants, especially by his grandson, R. Aharon the Second.

As regards the *vidduy* [confession] printed in *Beth Aharon* (pp. 12–15) as the personal confession of R. Aharon the Great, it has already been proved by Y. Tishby that this is merely a copy of an original composed by the author of the book *Hemdath Yamim*. Tishby rightly maintains that R. Aharon the Great

which, though of doubtful authenticity, combine to give us a picture of his character and his influence on his adherents down the generations. Thus, he is reported to have said that melancholy is not a sin, but that it dulls the heart more than the gravest sin. 'And what is actually the source of melancholy? It is when I feel I am entitled to something or lack something, physical or spiritual. But all this is my own good. And what of it, if I lack something? What really matters is that God should not be deprived of His due.' R. Aharon distinguishes between 'melancholy, which is a bad quality, and bitterness which is really wilfulness, because I have not made a start on doing good deeds. For nothing in the world, no matter how minute, can be achieved without devotion. And since I had no devotion, I have done nothing, and therefore I do not deserve anything; so that I cannot maintain that I lack anything. Nevertheless, I breathe God's air and have what I require. This in itself should make us happy. Hence bitterness is good.' R. Aharon expatiates on this point: 'There are some young scholars that think they are bitter, when in fact they are simply melancholy. A man must know how to distinguish between these two conditions. After the soul-searching that comes from melancholy, a man goes to sleep, being unable to bear himself, much less his friend, and seething with anger. But after the soul-searching that comes from bitterness, a man cannot sleep. For what actually is bitterness? The recognition that you have not begun to do good deeds. So you forthwith make haste and set yourself to study and prayer. Now you feel that you are a Jew. You enjoy seeing another Jew. Nevertheless, you must know that only a hair's breadth separates bitterness from melancholy. The most spiritual bitterness touches on melancholy, while even the coarsest joy springs from holiness.'⁴⁵ In another place, the following words are attributed to him: 'When we speak of the value of joyfulness, we do not mean the joy that comes from the performance of the *mitsvah*, since this joy is already

copied the confession out into his own *siddur*, and that the hasidim mistakenly thought that he was the author of it (*Tarbits*, Year 15, p. 175, note, Jerusalem 1944). This mistaken assumption is implied in the introductory remarks to the confession in *Beth Aharon*: 'Copied letter for letter from the wording of the confession in his holy *siddur*' (*Beth Aharon*, p. 12).

⁴⁵ These sayings about melancholy and joyfulness are of Yiddish origin. Kleinman, *Zikhron la-Rishonim*, p. 13.

a higher degree which not every Jew can be required to attain to. What we mean is the denial of melancholy. Quite simply, a Jew who is not happy with his lot as a Jew is ungrateful to God. It shows that he has never once heard the blessing, "That hast not made me a Gentile." But when he examines himself to see if he is a hasid or not, that is pride. What does it matter if he is a hasid or not? He is a Jew.⁴⁶

R. Aharon's humility and self-effacement are illustrated by the following story. On one occasion, one of the disciples of the Great *Maggid* happened to pass through Karlin on his way home from a visit to his master in Mezerich. His desire to see R. Aharon was so great that he decided to call on him, even though it was the middle of the night. So he went and knocked on the window of R. Aharon's house and called: 'Aharon, open the door to me!' When R. Aharon asked who was there, the other answered simply, 'I,' because he was sure that R. Aharon would recognise him by his voice. But R. Aharon did not reply, and did not open the door. Again the disciple knocked, and again R. Aharon made no response. Then the disciple asked: 'Aharon, why do you not want to open the door to me?' To this R. Aharon replied: 'Who is it that arrogantly calls himself "I", an appellation fitting and proper only to the Holy One Blessed Be He?' 'In that case,' said the disciple to himself, 'I have not yet learnt anything from my Teacher,' and he at once returned to Mezerich.⁴⁷

Hasidic doctrine has its own special definition of humility. Man is merely dust and ashes, and must therefore never forget his own imperfection in comparison with the perfection of the Creator; yet, at the same time, he must also know that he is the son of a King. True humility consists in the proper synthesis of these two perceptions. This was the kind of modesty possessed by R. Aharon the Great. In his will he calls himself 'the greatest of sinners and worst of offenders'; but, at the same time, he enjoins 'that my place of rest shall have a clear space, four cubits wide, left all around it—that is to say, that no one shall be buried within four cubits of my grave, unless

⁴⁶ These sayings about melancholy, bitterness, and joyfulness are also attributed, verbatim, to the *Tsaddik* R. Hanokh of Alexander. A. Z. Eshkoli, 'Ha-Hasiduth be-Polin,' in the book *Beth Yisrael be-Polin*, Pt. II, p. 129, ed. I. Halpern, Jerusalem 1953.

⁴⁷ This idea is also attributed to the *Tsaddik* R. Mordekhai of Lakhovich. M. H. Kleinman, *Or Yesharim*, p. 30, Petrokov 1924.

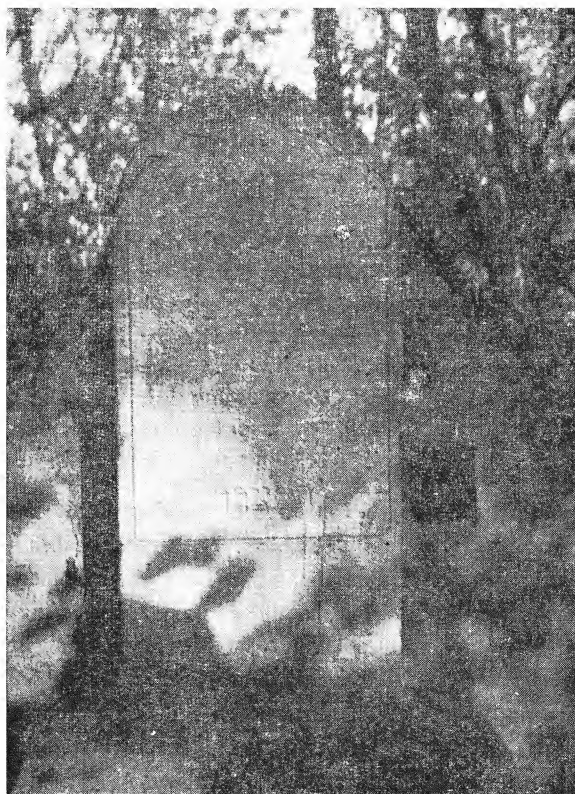


Title-page of the "Testament" of R. Aharon the Great of Karlin (Chernovits 1855)

it be someone whom you know I would certainly have wanted as my close neighbour. If anyone wishes to transgress this injunction and to bury there someone whom it is known I certainly would not have agreed to have as a close neighbour, let him know that, just as in my life in this world I zealously punished any who sinned against the Creator, so will he be punished by the zealous God of vengeance... I further enjoin that no words of praise shall be spoken of me. Whoever wishes to speak ill of me may do so, and I hereby give him leave; but let him know full well that, if he utters any falsehood, he will be judged for it in the court of heaven... Only the true disciples of our Teacher and Master [sc. R. Baer], the God-fearing and perfect ones, may speak such praises of me as they know for a certainty to be true and may intercede [sc. with God] on my behalf. But they too, must be extremely careful in any matter wherein they are not certain of what was my real intention. The best would be for them not to speak at all... Immediately after the seven days [of mourning], a memorial stone shall

be erected on my grave, but no honorific titles shall be inscribed on it. Only the following shall be engraved on the stone: Here lies so and so, who was himself vouchsafed Divine grace and was several times granted to obtain it for others, devotedly sacrificing himself for this purpose,⁴⁸ according to his own understanding, in order to obtain Divine grace for the many; and who used to admonish the masses with a sternness that concealed an inner love, in order to bring all Jews closer to their heavenly Father and join them to Him in a perfect union.⁴⁹

To his disciples he addressed the following last wish: 'All those that have ever learnt from me a



The Grave of R. Aharon the Great of Karlin
Photographed in 1932

⁴⁸ This may be an allusion to the persecutions R. Aharon experienced at the hands of the *mithnagdim*. The fact that he had prepared his will at the age of 36 perhaps indicates that his death was not a sudden one. Or perhaps it is to be explained by the belief that a man should face every day as his last.

⁴⁹ *Beth Aharon*, p. 15. Up to destruction of the Pinsk community (1941–1942) these words could be read on the gravestone of R. Aharon in the Karlin cemetery.

single letter of Divine worship, I do most solemnly and earnestly request them, as if I were actually standing in person in their presence . . . every day for a whole year [after my death] to study at least two or three lines of *Aggadah*.'

B. R. Shelomo of Karlin (1772–1792)

The year 1772 was a hard year for the hasidic movement as a whole, and in particular for Karlin hasidism. After the Passover Festival of that year, the first *herem* against the hasidim was proclaimed in Vilna. Three weeks after the proclamation of the *herem*, the Vilna community sent letters to the Brisk [Brest-Litovsk] community⁵⁰ and to the other communities in Lithuania and White Russia⁵¹ informing them of the step taken. At the instigation of the Vilna community, a *herem* was now also proclaimed in Brody. The Pinsk community, too, must undoubtedly have received the broadsheet announcing the excommunication of the hasidim, for in the minutes found in the Vilna communal archives we read: 'The leaders of the five principal communities in Lithuania have already taken measures to put a stop to this aberration, in the year [5]532 [=1772].'⁵² At the same time, the collection of anti-hasidic writings, *Zemir Aritsim ve-Harvoth Tsurim*, was circulated among Lithuanian Jewry. The Lithuanian communities were now divided by a spirit of bitter factional strife. In the hasidic camp the worst sufferers were the Karlin hasidim, who lost their leader, R. Aharon the Great, just at that time when the Vilna *kahal* forcibly dispersed the 'Karlin *minyán*.'

At the end of 1772, in the month of *Kislev*, the hasidic movement suffered a further blow with the death of its teacher and leader, the Great *Maggid* of Mezerich. The same year saw the first partition of Poland, which resulted in the severance of White Russia from Lithuania. In consequence of this great political change, the Karlin hasidim were largely deprived of the spiritual and organisational support which they had been receiving from the hasidim in neighbouring White Russia led by R. Mendel of Vitebsk and R. Yisrael of Polotsk. The new political frontier did not, it is true, cut off the Jews on either side of it from all communication with each other. Thus, for example,

⁵⁰ *Zemir Aritsim ve-Harvoth Tsurim* Dubnow, *op. cit.*, p. 21 ff.

⁵¹ *Op. cit.*, pp. 12, 23.

⁵² Graetz, *op. cit.*, Vol. XI, p. 557.

the decisions on religious questions and on points of Mosaic law handed down by the *Beth-Din* of the Brisk or Vilna community⁵³ were still binding on all the Jewish communities. Similarly, the relations between the Lithuanian hasidim and their counterparts in White Russia continued uninterrupted. But since the main attack on hasidism was launched in Lithuania, the Karlin hasidim suffered more than those in White Russia. It was not until after the second and third partitions of Poland, in 1793 and 1795, that the two regions were once again united under Russian rule.

The war against the hasidim was jointly waged by the *Rabbanim* and the heads of the *kahal*, which continued to be recognised by the secular authorities even after the abolition of the *Vaad ha-Medinah* (1761).⁵⁴ Thus, for example, the anti-hasidic broadsheets were signed not only by the *Rabbanim*, but also by communal leaders,⁵⁵ and sometimes—as in the case of the broadsheets of 1781—even by the latter alone.⁵⁶ The sheets were sent from one town to another addressed to both the *Rabbanim* and the *kahal*.⁵⁷ The participation of the leaders of the *kahal* in these anti-hasidic activities provoked the hasidim into a deliberate attempt to shake off the *kahal's* jurisdiction, a struggle in which they were considerably helped by the general dissatisfaction of the masses with the rule of the *kahal*. The fight against the *kahal* was begun by the Karlin hasidim and ended in their complete emancipation from its control (1793), but only after a long and bitter struggle.

Prompted by the 'bans' of 1772, the mithnagdim proceeded to hound the hasidim, spying on them, boycotting them socially, and refusing to intermarry with them. The *kahal* forcibly closed their prayer-houses, and the hasidim were compelled to say their prayers and hold their meetings clandestinely. In this critical period, the heavy task of the physical and spiritual leadership of the hasidim was assumed by R. Aharon the Great's most devoted disciple, R. Shelomo, to whom the Karlin hasidim turned for protection. He headed the Karlin movement throughout these

troubled years (1772–1792). After a life full of suffering he was driven out of his native town, Karlin, and died a martyr's death in his place of banishment, Ludmir [Vladimir-Volhynsk].

R. Shelomo, the son of R. Meir Halevi of Karlin, was born, according to hasidic tradition, in 1738.⁵⁸ Of his birthplace and childhood nothing certain is known. Even hasidic records on these points are very scanty.⁵⁹ Like his teacher, R. Aharon the Great, R. Shelomo was also one of the Great *Maggid's* chief disciples, and he is mentioned by the *Maggid* in the latter's letter to the Pinsk *Moreh-Tsedek*, R. Eliezer Halevi.⁶⁰ When R. Aharon set up his *beth midrash* in Karlin, R. Shelomo became one of his most devoted disciples,⁶¹ and used to travel together with him to Mezerich. And when, after R. Aharon's death, R. Shelomo took over the leadership of the Karlin hasidim, he made himself responsible for the upbringing of R. Aharon's son, R. Asher, who was to be the next *Tsadik* in the Karlin dynasty founded by his father.

At this very same time (1772–1773), another of the Great *Maggid's* disciples, R. Hayyim-Heikel, who was also a disciple of R. Aharon's and had in his youth been a *hazzan* [synagogue cantor] in Karlin, established another hasidic centre in Lithuania—in the small town of Amdur [Indura, near Grodno]. R. Hayyim-Heikel's extreme and uncompromising anti-rabbinism still further exacerbated the relations between *Rabbanim* and hasidim in Lithuania.⁶² Karlin and Amdur were the two main strongholds of Lithuanian hasidism in those critical days. In the other parts of Lithuania, especially in Vilna and the region of Polesia, the hasidim were few in number. This diffi-

⁵³ J. Hessen, *Istoriya Yevreyskogo Naroda v Rossii*, Vol. I, p. 54, Leningrad 1925.

⁵⁴ Hessen, *op. cit.*, p. 49 f.

⁵⁵ 'Zemir Aritsim ve-Harvoth Tsurim,' *op. cit.*, p. 23.

⁵⁶ Cf., the Pinsk and Slutsk *herem*, published by E. T. Zweifel, *Shalom al Yisrael*, Pt. II, pp. 41, 42, Zhitomir 1869.

⁵⁷ 'Zemir Aritsim ve-Harvoth Tsurim,' *op. cit.*, pp. 21, 22.

⁵⁸ Kleinman, *Mazkereth Shem ha-Gedolim*, p. 63; W. Z. Rabinowitsch, 'Min ha-Genizah ha-Stolinaith,' *Zion*, 5th year, p. 244; Kleinbaum, *Shema Shelomo*, Pt. II, p. 1, note and p. 58.

⁵⁹ Kleinbaum, *op. cit.*, Pt. II, *passim*.

⁶⁰ [Bodek], *Seder ha-Doroth mi-Talmidei ha-Besht*, p. 37; Valden, *Shem ha-Gedolim he-Hadash, Maarekhet Sefarim*, p. 69; s.v.: *Reiah ha-Sadeh*, Warsaw 1874. Cf., *supr.*

⁶¹ There is a hasidic story that, before R. Shelomo became a disciple of the Great *Maggid*, R. Aharon said to the *Maggid*: 'I have a young man in Karlin, named Shelomo, who, when he recites the Psalms on *Yom Kippur* after the *Kol Nidrei*, leaves no holy spark in Poland, Lithuania and White Russia which he does not bring before the throne of glory' (Kleinbaum, *op. cit.*, Pt. II, p. 3).

⁶² V. *supr.*, n. 28.

cult period in the history of Lithuanian hasidism is well summed up in Solomon Maimon's statement: 'All that now remained of this sect was a few isolated and scattered remnants.'⁶³

In White Russia at this time were living R. Mendel of Vitebsk, R. Yisrael of Polotsk, R. Avraham of Kalisk, and R. Shneur-Zalman of Ladi, then still a young man. The main hasidic leader in this region was R. Baer's elderly disciple, R. Mendel of Vitebsk (who was also known as R. Mendel of Minsk) and, later R. Mendel of Horodok. Still in the Great *Maggid's* lifetime, R. Mendel had taken up residence in Minsk in the 'Province of Lithuania,' and made it his centre for the propagation of hasidic doctrine. In the small volume *Zemir Aritsim ve-Harvoth Tsurim*, published in 1772, we read the following: '... the holy community of Minsk where dwells the symbol of bigotry... in whose company there is a band of wicked men, like R. Mendel of Minsk. On this R. Mendel we have the testimony of two and more witnesses [that he has done] disgraceful and ugly deeds such as are forbidden in Israel...' From a deposition made by a mithnaged in the year 1772, we learn that Minsk was then a hasidic pilgrimage centre: 'R. Hirsch the son of R. Iser of Horodno [Grodno] wrote down all the names [of the men]... who wanted to travel to Minsk, and [the mithnagdim] prevented them from going.' The 'house of the hasidim' in Minsk, which served as a refuge for the persecuted adherents of the movement, is also mentioned by R. David of Makov.⁶⁴ It is quite possible that R. Mendel's presence and activities in Minsk were among the factors that decided the Minsk *kahal* to intensify its attacks on the hasidim just at that time. R. Mendel was forced by the harassment

of the mithnagdim to leave Minsk and take up residence in the small town of Horodok (close to Vitebsk). R. Mendel's forced departure from Minsk took place about ten years before R. Shelomo's banishment from Karlin and R. Levi-Yitshak's expulsion from Pinsk.

In c. 1775 R. Mendel of Vitebsk and R. Shneur-Zalman went to Vilna in an attempt to explain the tenets of hasidism to the *Gaon* and to make peace between the two warring factions. But the *Gaon* refused to see them. They then tried to meet the mithnagdim of Shklov for the same purpose, but there, too, they were rebuffed.⁶⁵ As a result of this hostile attitude on the part of the mithnagdim, the leaders of the hasidim in White Russia, with the sole exception of R. Shneur-Zalman, decided in 1777 to emigrate to Palestine. Since R. Shneur-Zalman maintained that he was not yet fit to be their Rebbe, the hasidim of White Russia were left without a leader and used to address their enquiries to R. Mendel of Vitebsk in faraway Palestine.⁶⁶ In this interregnum (1777-1781)—'between one king and the next,' to use the hasidic expression—R. Shelomo of Karlin began to extend his influence into White Russia, and many hasidim there chose him as their Rebbe.⁶⁷

Preserved among the hasidic writings is a letter of farewell from R. Shelomo to the hasidim of Shklov in White Russia. He writes as a *Tsaddik* and leader to his followers: 'I beseech the Lord that they [sc. the hasidim living in Shklov] may be granted grace through me and no one else.'⁶⁸ This provides further evidence that the links between the Jews in the two northern provinces of Lithuania and Reissen were not broken by the political partition of Poland: R. Mendel of Vitebsk and R. Shneur-Zalman travel to the Vilna *Gaon* to debate the doctrines of hasidism with him, and conversely R. Shelomo of Karlin's influence penetrates from Lithuania, across the frontiers of Poland, into White Russia.

Found amongst the 'holy writings' in the Stolin *genizah* is the following letter from R. Shelomo of Karlin to R. Aharon of Vitebsk:

'Greetings to my very dear friend, the learned and renowned hasid... R. Aharon Segal, may his light shine out!

⁶³ Maimon, *op. cit.*, p. 210.

⁶⁴ 'Zemir Aritsim'... etc., *op. cit.*, pp. 12, 26; *Shever Posheim* and *Zimrath Am ha-Arets*, cited by Dubnow, *Toledoth ha-Hasiduth*, pp. 369, 447.

Dubnow discussed the authorship of these collections of polemical writings: Dubnow, *Toledoth ha-Hasiduth*, pp. 412-417; *Sefer Shimon Dubnow, 'Mikhtevei Dubnow el Pinhas Torberg'*, ed. S. Rawidowicz, pp. 353-361, London 1954. An attempt to decide this question is made by A. Rubinstein, 'Shever Posheim le-R. David mi-Makov—Zoth Torath ha-Kanauth le-R. Yehezkel mi-Radzinim,' *Kiryath Sefer*, Vol. XXXV, pp. 240-249, Jerusalem 1960; *Idem*, 'Ha-Kuntres "Zimrath Am ha-Arets" bi-Kethav-Yad,' *Aresheth*, ed. N. Ben-Menahem and Y. Rafael, Vol. III, p. 193 ff., Jerusalem 1961. Cf.: Wilensky, M., *Hasidim u-Mithnagdim*, passim, Jerusalem 1970.

⁶⁵ Dubnow, *Toledoth ha-Hasiduth*, p. 133 ff.; Hilman, *Iggeroth Baal ha-Tanya*, p. 95.

⁶⁶ *Peri ha-Arets*, by R. Mendel of Vitebsk, at the end of the volume, *Kopys* 1814.

⁶⁷ Heilman, *Beth Rabbi*, Pt. I, p. 128.

⁶⁸ *Idem*, *ibid.*

'Now... about the matter that has occurred in your province I have much to say to your honour, only it is not possible to explain everything in writing, but only face to face. However, the truth is with us, for God performs wonders unaided, even against the laws of nature... in all places and at all times. Fare you well. From him who prays that the love of the Creator shall be shown to Israel, Shelomo, the son of... R. Meir Segal of blessed memory.

'I request you to send me two glass bottles.'

The letter bears no date nor does R. Shelomo specify what he means by 'the matter that has occurred in your province [sc. Reissen: Vitebsk].' But possibly this letter, which is addressed to one of R. Shelomo's followers or supporters, belongs to the period under discussion.⁶⁹

As is well known, it early became one of the most important principles of hasidism for every hasidic group to be headed by a leader and teacher. Hence it was inconceivable for any such group to exist without a Rebbe, i.e., without a *Tsaddik*. The anti-hasidic broadsheets of 1781 show us how significant the role of the *Tsaddik* was even in those early days.⁷⁰ Hence the great importance of R. Shelomo of Karlin for the now leaderless hasidim of White Russia. The conditions of the time made it impossible for R. Shelomo to extend the influence of the hasidic movement; and indeed any such attempt would have been foreign to his wholly pacific temperament. His task was the more modest one of holding together and strengthening the already existing groups of hasidim in White Russia, by becoming their Rebbe after their own *Tsaddikim* had left them to fend for themselves.

In these same years—up to 1781—Karlin hasidism gradually began to provide itself with a proper internal organisation. During a lull in the attacks of the mithnagdim, R. Shelomo was able to devote himself to the task of giving Karlin hasidism its own distinctive form. He placed special emphasis on two principles. The first of these was the manner of praying that he had taken over from his own teacher, R. Aharon—with the maximum of intellectual intensity [*kavvanah*], emotional fervour, and spiritual devotion. 'For

he used to move mountains with the power of his prayer, since he devoted his whole soul to the Almighty.' Hasidic tradition relates that, when a friend once invited R. Shelomo for the following day, he replied: 'You stupid man! This evening I must say the evening prayer and read the *Shema*, which means devoting my spirit to God. Then comes sleep, and the next day I must pray again, and in prayer there are several worlds till the reading of the *Shema* is reached. And then there is prostration in prayer, which is also a devoting of the spirit to God, and it is still uncertain whether the Almighty will grant my wish [sc. to remain alive]. Yet you want me to promise you that I shall come to your house tomorrow!' A similar story is also told of R. Uri of Strelisk, a devoted disciple of R. Shelomo of Karlin. It is related that, before going to say the morning prayer, he used every day to take a fond farewell of his wife and children and tell them his last wishes, in case he should depart this life while praying, as a result of the intensity of his devotion to God [*devekuth*]. To illustrate the intensity of R. Shelomo's belief in the power of prayer, particularly of his own prayers, the hasidim relate that, once it was charged in the Court of Heaven that the children of Israel were no longer praying with true *kavvanah*. A certain king therefore determined to forbid all prayer. In the commotion that ensued, the *Tsaddikim* in Heaven were first asked if they agreed to the decree. Then R. Shelomo of Karlin was asked. He prayed with such fervour that, when he passionately declared that he undertook to pray for all Israel, the decree was forthwith annulled.

These and similar stories, as well as various teachings attributed to R. Shelomo, show that the 'Karlin manner of prayer' was his creation. From his correspondence with R. Shneur-Zalman we learn that R. Shelomo 'used to despise the natural piety [i.e., the non-ecstatic prayer]' of the mithnagdim all around him. R. Aharon the Great, the thinker, taught that every act performed by man on earth should be a kind of Divine worship or prayer. R. Shelomo on the other hand, the man of feeling, is said to have taught that all other acts are only ways leading to the true worship of the Creator which is prayer, and prayer is therefore of greater importance than anything else. He is reported to have said that the greatest miracle is to teach a single Jew to pour out his heart to the Almighty.

The second main principle developed by R. She-

⁶⁹ Rabinowitsch, '*Min ha-Genizah ha-Stolinaith*,' *Zion*, 5th year, p. 244; Hilman, *op. cit.*, pp. 32, 107, 177. Cf. *infr.*, the comment on this letter.

⁷⁰ Zweifel, *op. cit.*, Pt. II, pp. 37, 38: The wording of the Grodno *herem*.

lomo in Karlin hasidism was the concept of *tsaddik*-ism. The essence of this idea was that the *Tsaddik* is not merely a spiritual leader and teacher, but also has the power to help his followers in wordly affairs. From being a spiritual leader, he thus becomes a wonder-working saint. Hasidic tradition, which refers to R. Shelomo as 'the little *Baal Shem*,' reports him as saying: 'In Heaven a measure is kept of the fields and woods traversed by the hasid on his journeys to the *Tsaddik*.' In its conception of the *Tsaddik*, Karlin hasidism differs considerably from *Habad* hasidism and is closer to the southern branch of the movement in Volhynia and Podolia. R. Shelomo's doctrine with regard to the importance and power of the *Tsaddik* was still further developed by R. Asher, his successor as head of the Karlin dynasty, and reached its climax in the time of R. Asher's son, R. Aharon the Second. R. Shelomo's teaching was also propagated after his death by his two most important disciples, besides R. Asher: R. Mordekhai of Lakhovich, and R. Uri of Strelisk, 'the Seraph.'⁷¹

There was originally nothing at all conceited or vainglorious in this exaggerated conception of the *Tsaddik*'s importance. On the contrary, it was accompanied by a profound awareness of the value of every individual Jew, even the most insignificant. The following parable of R. Shelomo, which R. Aharon the Second of Karlin was in the habit of quoting, testifies to this remarkable awareness of the great individual worth of every single Jew in the sum total of the whole Jewish nation: 'All Israel together are a single edifice, and every individual Jew is needed to make this edifice complete. It is like a man who has to get something lying in a very high place and who hasn't a ladder to reach that place. What does he do? He stands many men on each other's backs, from the floor up to the place where the object he wants is lying. Can it be said that a single one of these men, even the smallest of them, is superfluous? If a single one of them moves, they will all fall down. So it is with the whole people of Israel. Every single Jew completes the edifice, each according to his own size and worth, small and great alike, and all together they can ennoble this world and raise it to ever greater spiritual heights.'

At this time, the well-known *Tsaddik* R. Levi-Yitshak (of Berdichev) was *Av Beth-Din* and *Rosh Yeshivah* in Pinsk. This R. Levi-Yitshak was remark-

able, not only for his own individual interpretation of hasidic doctrine,⁷² but also for his talmudic scholarship. He was elected *Rav* in Pinsk in 1775 or 1776, during the lull in the mithnaged attacks on the hasidim. The only information that has come down to us about his pro-hasidic activities consists of a few popular legends, according to which the leaders of the *kahal* were displeased with him for devoting most of his time to prayer and the like, instead of dispensing halakhic rulings. It was evidently the lull in the hostilities between mithnagdim and hasidim in the later 1770s that made it possible for a *Tsaddik* like R. Levi-Yitshak, who aspired to putting hasidic doctrine into practice in his daily life, to be elected *Av Beth-Din* in Pinsk.⁷³

⁷² Dubnow, *Toledoth ha-Hasiduth*, p. 193 ff.; Horodezki, *Ha-Hasiduth ve-ha-Hasidim*, Vol. II, p. 71 and others.

⁷³ Regarding the time when R. Levi-Yitshak was driven out of Pinsk we have the following reports:

From the approval given by R. Levi-Yitshak to the book *Erkhei ha-Kinnuyim on Lag ba-Omer* 1775—which he signed 'here in the holy community of Zhelikhov'—and from his approval to the book *Meir Nathiv*, dated the 4th *Elul*, 1776—which he signed 'Rav of the holy community of Pinsk'—it may be deduced that R. Levi-Yitshak came to Pinsk between the above two dates (H. Lieberman, *Hearoth Bibliografiyoth, Alexander Marx Jubilee Volume*, p. 15, New York 1943).

Among my late father's papers there is a letter from S. Dubnow, in which it is mentioned that my father saw in Pinsk a *pinkas* containing the signature of R. Levi-Yitshak in his capacity as the *Av Beth-Din* of Pinsk and dated the 8th *Heshvan* [=6th November], 1780. But in the writings of the mithnagdim, R. Levi-Yitshak is referred to, even in later years—the end of 1781 and in 1784—as 'the man of Zhelikhov,' especially by the *Rav* of Brest-Litovsk, R. Avraham Katzenellenbogen (Dubnow, *Kithvei Hithnagduth*, *Devir*, Vol. I, pp. 304–305, No. 6, Berlin 1923; Dubnow, *Toledoth ha-Hasiduth*, p. 152, n. 3).

In the *Stolin genizah* there was a legal decision signed by R. Levi-Yitshak of Berdichev from the year 1780, in the matter of a dispute between two Jews of Petrikov (a small town not far from Pinsk). Although we do not know in what capacity R. Levi-Yitshak signed this judgment, it may be presumed that he gave his verdict as the *Av Beth-Din* of Pinsk and its district, which is the title that appears at the head of his approval of R. Meir Margalioth's books, *Meir Nethivim* (Polonnaye 1791) and *Sod Yakhin u-Boaz* (Ostrog 1794).

The evidence of the approvals and other documents quoted here, to the effect that R. Levi-Yitshak held the office of *Rav* in Zhelikhov before he became *Rav* of

⁷¹ [Bodek,] *op. cit.*, p. 66–68.

However, the wrath of the Lithuanian *mithnagdim* was soon aroused again by a combination of factors—the great success of hasidism in the south, the stubborn resistance of the hasidim in the north, and the hasidic attack on the rabbinical method of talmudic study and on the whole rabbinical philosophy of life. The leaders of this attack were R. Shelomo of Karlin (as we learn from his correspondence with R. Shneur-Zalman), and also the second Lithuanian *Tsaddik* of that period, R. Hayyim-Heikel of Amdur, and others. Especially infuriating to the *mithnagdim* was the publication of the first hasidic book, *Toledoth Yaakov Yosef*, by R. Yaakov-Yosef of Polonnoye (1780), without the consent of the *Rabbanim*. The renewed conflict which now (1781) broke out was even bitterer than that of 1772 and the Karlin hasidim were now persecuted even more severely.

In the summer of 1781, the Lithuanian communities for the second time proclaimed a *herem* on the hasidim. At about the same time, R. Levi-Yitshak defended hasidism in a public debate in Warsaw with the *Rav* of Brisk, R. Avraham Katzenellenbogen. On the 20th *Av*, 1781, the *herem* was read out in all synagogues and *batei midrash* in Vilna. Four days later the Vilna community sent a letter to all the other Lithuanian communities, calling on them, too, to impose the *herem* on the hasidim and to boycott them. Two emissaries were sent for this purpose to the Lithuanian fair at Zelva (near Grodno), where all the heads of the Lithuanian communities had gathered together. At the instigation of these emissaries, and on the authority of the Vilna *herem*, a ban on the hasidim was now proclaimed in Zelva, too (1st *Elul*).⁷⁴ The communal leaders informed their communities in writing that the hasidim were to be placed under the

ban and persecuted relentlessly. The representatives of the Grodno community, headed by their *Av Beth-Din*, wrote to their members to this effect on the self-same day.⁷⁵ On the next day, the *Av Beth-Din* of Brisk, the well-known adversary of hasidism, R. Avraham Katzenellenbogen, who was also present at the Zelva fair, drew up a public proclamation containing a bitter, vengeful denunciation of the hasidim. Similar action was taken by the representatives of Pinsk⁷⁶ and Slutsk.⁷⁷ On the return of the emissaries to Vilna (13th *Elul*), the *herem* was again proclaimed in that city, this time with the solemn ritual of blasts on the *shofar*, lighting of black candles, and so on.

The letter drawn up by the representatives of the Pinsk community and sent from Zelva to Pinsk is important for our study, because of the proximity of the latter town to Karlin. The text of the letter reads as follows:

'On the occasion of our being here in the community of Zelva on the day of the market, the Lord willed that we should meet . . . a great and esteemed member of the holy community of Vilna, the learned scholar . . . David *Moreh-Tsedek* . . . and his compeer, the renowned scholar . . . Zelig. They showed us a letter . . . which the Lord prompted . . . the leaders of the holy community of Vilna [to write], together with the *Rav* of Vilna and also our Master the pious *Gaon* [sc. R. Eliyahu], who . . . girded up their strength to fight zealously for the Lord of Hosts and built a fence to repair the breached edifice [of the *Torah*] . . . as was explained at length . . . They were surely right in all that they said, that there should be one *Torah* for them all, joined together and united in a lasting bond . . . Therefore we, too, do fully and firmly endorse . . . all the words . . . of the leaders of the above-mentioned holy community [of Vilna] together with the above-mentioned *Gaon*, as written . . . in their aforementioned letter. It is fitting and proper for God-fearing men of perfect faith to strengthen and support each other and restore the crown [sc. the *Torah*] to its former glory, that they should not be se-

Pinsk, is confirmed by the order of the titles given him in hasidic literature. Thus, for example, the *Tsaddik* R. Yaakov-Yitshak of Lantsut writes: 'I heard from the *Rav* of Pinsk (long may he live!), who was formerly *Rav* in the holy community of Zhelikhov' (quoted by Dubnow, *Toledoth ha-Hasiduth*, p. 216, n. 1).

R. Yosef Levinstein, in his letter to Dubnow dated the 1st *Av*, 1895, mentions the rabbinical offices held by R. Levi-Yitshak of Berdichev in the same order, Zhelikhov-Pinsk-Berdichev (Wilensky, '*Hearoth la-Pulmusim bein ha-Hasidim ve-ha-Mithnagdim*,' *Tarbits*, Vol. XXX, p. 402, Jerusalem 1961; Rabinowitsch, *Lithuanian Hasidism*, Chap. 3, n. 11).

⁷⁴ Dubnow, *Toledoth ha-Hasiduth*, pp. 141 ff., 146; *idem*, '*Kithvei Hithnagduth al Kath ha-Hasidim*,' *Devir*, Vol. I, p. 297 ff., Berlin 1923.

⁷⁵ Zweifel, *op. cit.*, Pt. II, p. 37; Dubnow, *Toledoth ha-Hasiduth*, pp. 147, 148.

⁷⁶ Dubnow, '*Kithvei Hithnagduth*,' *op. cit.*, pp. 304, 305; Zweifel, *op. cit.*, p. 41. There are differences in the wording and the signatures between the version given by Dubnow—which is cited here—and that given by Zweifel. But in both these versions the signature of the Pinsk *Av Beth-Din* is missing.

⁷⁷ Zweifel, *op. cit.*, p. 41.

parated from each other, but should be joined together like one man, as of old. We have agreed to the enforcement of the great *herem* proclaimed in the... glorious community of Vilna and of the words uttered and heard in the holy community of Zelva on the day of the market. All that hear this... shall cease to be... separated from the community of the Lord... and [shall cease] to reject the authority of the early Sages, who from of old have followed their thoughts which are based on... the truth...

'In confirmation whereof we, the leaders and officers of the Pinsk community, gathered here in Zelva on the day of the market, do herewith sign our names, on the sixth day of the week, the 3rd *Elul*, [5]541 [=1781].

'Signed: Nahman, the son of Eliezer Segal;
Yaakov, the son of Avraham;
Yehudah-Leib, the son of Elhanan;
Menahem-Nahum, the son of R. Meir;
David, the son of... Feivel;
Shalom, the son of Eliyahu;
Tsevi-Hirsch, the son of Dov-Baer.'

Unlike the public proclamation issued by the heads of the Grodno and Brisk communities, which was also signed by the *Av Beth-Din* of the town, the call of the Pinsk leaders does not bear the signature of the *Av Beth-Din*, since in this particular year this office in Pinsk was held by R. Levi-Yitshak.

The letters from the Vilna *kahal* and from the *Rav* of Brisk, R. Avraham Katzenellenbogen, are particularly strongly worded. Realising that the weapons employed against the hasidim in 1772—the closure of hasidic prayer-houses, the forcible breaking up of hasidic groups and the like—had been completely ineffective, the *Rabbanim* this time decided to ban the hasidim from all social contact with the Jewish community and therefore decreed that no one should eat at their table or have any dealings with them at all. This new wave of bans and boycotts that swept through the towns of Lithuania must have constricted R. Shelomo of Karlin's sphere of influence again and confined it to Karlin which, together with Amdur, once more became the refuge of Lithuanian hasidism.

In this desperately critical time for the hasidic movement, a new figure came to the fore—the youngest and most spiritually gifted of the Great *Maggid's* disciples, R. Shneur-Zalman. The main centre of R. Shneur-Zalman's influence was in White Russia and he was, in fact, the founder of hasidism in these north-

ern districts. He gave this hasidism a distinctive character of its own, which marked it off from both the hasidism of Karlin and that of Volhynia and Podolia.

R. Shneur-Zalman, known for short as 'the *Rav*,' was born and educated in White Russia. He acquired an erudite knowledge of both revealed teaching [*Gemara*] and hidden lore [*Kabbalah*]. At the age of twenty (in 1768) he went to the Great *Maggid* in Mezerich and became one of his most devoted disciples. It was the *Maggid* that assigned him the task of compiling a *Shulhan Arukh* [codification of halakhic law] in the spirit of hasidism (the so-called *Shulhan Arukh shel Ha-Rav*). In the course of two years R. Shneur-Zalman compiled the main sections of this work. After the Great *Maggid's* death, R. Shneur-Zalman did not seek to become a *Tsaddik*, like most of his Teacher's disciples, but, together with the *Maggid's* son, R. Avraham Hamalakh, he continued his study of *Gemara* and *Kabbalah*. Eventually, he became one of the close associates of R. Mendel of Vitebsk, whom he accompanied on his journeys to Vilna (c. 1775) and Shklov to take part in debates on hasidism. When, as described above, the leaders of the White Russian hasidim emigrated in 1777 to Palestine, R. Shneur-Zalman—apparently at R. Mendel's request—settled in White Russia. According to hasidic tradition, R. Mendel designated him his successor. Nevertheless, R. Shneur-Zalman refused to take over the leadership of the hasidim at once. It was not till three years later that he agreed to accept this responsibility. During these years, as already stated, White Russia came under the influence of R. Shelomo of Karlin. Also living in this region at this time were R. Yisrael of Polotsk (who had returned from Palestine) and R. Yissakhar-Baer of Lubavich with their own hasidic groups of followers.

In c. 1781 R. Shneur-Zalman assumed the leadership of the hasidim in White Russia and created what came to be known as the *Habad* brand of hasidism [an acronym of the Hebrew words *hokhmah* = wisdom, *binah* = understanding, *daath* = knowledge]. He introduced into hasidism something of the spirit and character of the talmudic 'Lithuanian' Jews of the northern provinces. He also enriched hasidic literature with his work on the philosophy of hasidism, *Likkutei Amarim*, better known as *Tanya*. In connection with the polemical debate between the *mithnagdim* and the hasidim, it is especially important to note that R. Shneur-Zalman did not regard hasidism as a protest

against rabbinism, but rather as its complement; just as he did not consider the head of a hasidic community to be a wonder-working *Tsaddik*, but merely a spiritual guide and leader. A Jew needed to study hasidism just as much as he needed to study the *Talmud*, and vice versa; and therefore the religious opinions and way of life of talmudic scholars were not to be despised. The essence and spirit of Judaism were to be learnt from all the available sources; and every form of prayer—not necessarily or solely that of hasidism—brought the Jew closer to his heavenly Father.

R. Shneur-Zalman's name rapidly became widely known. His influence was not restricted to White Russia (Vitebsk, Mohilev, Shklov, etc.), but spread also to a section of the Lithuanian hasidim, especially those in nearby Vilna where the hasidim were being particularly violently persecuted and had no *Tsaddik* or spiritual guide. The Vilna hasidim were called 'Karliners' already in the time of the Great *Maggid*,⁷⁸ and the name continued to be applied to them still later (1800),⁷⁹ even though they had never actually been followers of the Karlin Rebbe. We hear nothing about any relations between R. Aharon the Great and the two propagators of hasidism who were then in Vilna—R. Hayyim and R. Iser—or indeed about R. Aharon's whole attitude to the Vilna hasidim. Hence, when R. Shneur-Zalman appeared on the historical scene, most of the hasidim in Vilna regarded him as their leader and Rebbe, though the *mithnagdim* continued to refer to them as 'Karliners,' a name which had for them become synonymous with 'hasidim.' The hasidim of White Russia, some of whom had from 1777 to 1781 looked to R. Shelomo of Karlin as their leader, now also went over to R. Shneur-Zalman. The sphere of influence of Karlin hasidim within the territory of Polesia was thus little by little reduced at the beginning of the 1780s.

Under the pressure of the *mithnaged* attacks from outside and of the contraction of his influence from within, R. Shelomo was forced to abandon the old home of hasidism, Karlin, and seek another shelter for himself and his *beth midrash*. According to hasidic tradition, he had originally intended to withdraw to

the small White Russian town of Beshenkovich (in the province of Vitebsk), where several of his followers lived. But, in the meantime, R. Shneur-Zalman's influence had become predominant there and R. Shelomo found himself obliged to ask his consent to the move.⁸⁰ R. Shneur-Zalman is said to have made his consent conditional upon R. Shelomo's undertaking not to show contempt for talmudic scholars and scholarship, not to dismiss as worthless the performance of *mitsvoth* even without *kavvanah* [true devotion], and not to teach that the *Tsaddik* has the power to help his followers in everything—that 'the *Tsaddik* carries the whole flock.' R. Shelomo accepted the first two demands, but rejected the third, and was therefore compelled to give up the idea of settling in White Russia. This hasidic tradition is evidence of the difference of opinion between these two hasidic teachers on the place and function of the *Tsaddik* in the life of the hasidic community. It further confirms that, in Karlin hasidic circles just as in other branches of the hasidic movement (R. Yaakov-Yosef of Polonnoye, R. Hayyim-Heikel of Amdur, R. Avraham of Kalisk, and others), the orthodoxy of the *mithnagdim* was contemptuously dismissed as a purely formalistic observance, and their method of talmudic study was likewise treated with scorn. From the written approval by R. Shelomo prefaced to the volume *Kether Shem Tov*, we learn that in 1784—the year of the book's publication—he was already in Ludmir. He signs the approval as follows: 'Shelomo of Karlin, at present in the holy community of Ludmir.'⁸¹

From what is known of R. Aharon Segal of Vitebsk, to whom the above-quoted letter from R. Shelomo was addressed, it may be assumed that R. Shelomo's words—'about the matter that has occurred in your province I have much to say to your honour, only it is not possible to explain everything in writing... However, the truth is with us'—refer to differences of opinion, perhaps even to a dispute about their respective authorities 'in your province' (i.e., White Russia), between R. Shelomo and R. Shneur-Zalman. R. Aharon Segal of Vitebsk was originally a loyal adherent of R. Shneur-Zalman, and the latter

⁷⁸ '*Zemir Aritsim ve-Harvoth Tsurim*,' *op. cit.*, p. 25; 'And they decided to disperse the *minyán* of the Karlin hasidim [in Vilna, Passover 1772].' V. *supr.*

⁷⁹ In the Russian government archives and in R. Avigdor of Pinsk's denunciation of the hasidim. V. *infr.*

⁸⁰ Heilman, *Beth Rabbi*, Pt. II, p. 128, n. 2. This account is attributed to a descendant of R. Shneur Zalman. S. Y. Zevin, *Sippurei Hasidim, Kerekh Moadim*, p. 158, Tel Aviv 1957.

⁸¹ Cited by Dubnow, *Toledoth ha-Hasiduth*, p. 157, n. 1.

refers to him in one of his letters (apparently from the early 1780s) as 'the renowned *Rav* and *hasid*.' Subsequently however, he became one of R. Shneur-Zalman's opponents. R. Avraham of Kalisk was obliged to come to his defence in a letter which he wrote to R. Shneur-Zalman: '... Let the wise man hearken and learn to be reconciled with the friend of the Lord, the aged and venerable *Rav*, the Teacher R. Aharon Halevi of Vitebsk; for it is to his honour to support him and to esteem him as formerly... There is no greater profanation of the Divine Name than to humiliate such a man.' In one of his later letters—after 1805—R. Shneur-Zalman writes disparagingly of R. Aharon Segal: 'It is my duty to warn our followers... to keep far away from the band of agitators and seducers who travel with the letter of the Rebbe of Tiberias [sc. R. Avraham of Kalisk], led by the well-known old man from beyond the river of Vitebsk.' R. Shneur-Zalman here refers to R. Aharon Segal as the 'old man' (the appellation used by R. Avraham of Kalisk), without explicitly naming him. R. Shelomo of Karlin and R. Aharon of Vitebsk joined forces in opposing R. Shneur-Zalman. It is to the ferment created in hasidic circles as a result of this joint opposition that R. Shelomo is referring in his above-quoted letter to R. Aharon.

Just as R. Shelomo had been forced by the pressure of the *mithnagdim* to leave Karlin before 1784, so R. Levi-Yitshak was in 1785 driven out of Pinsk by the local population. On the 18th *Tammuz*, 1785, he was still a *Rav* in Pinsk: that is the date on which he wrote his approval of the book *Halakhah Pesukah* (Shklov, 1787) by R. Shelomo Katz of Pinsk. But on the 25th *Tammuz*, 1785, when he wrote his approval of the book *Kanfei Yonah*, by R. Menahem-Azaryah (Korets, 1786), he signed it 'here in the community of Berdichev.' It follows then, that in the week between the 18th and 25th *Tammuz*, 1785, R. Levi-Yitshak must have moved from Pinsk to Berdichev. According to the hasidic sources, physical force was used to expel him and his family from Pinsk. This indignity was no doubt brought about by the violently worded letter from the heads of the Vilna *kahal*, led by the *Gaon* R. Eliyahu and the *Rav* R. Shemuel, to 'the leaders of... the holy community of Pinsk.'⁸² Here is the text of the letter:

'May the righteous flourish... the leaders... and sages... of the holy community of Pinsk...

'We have received your appeal... couched in

words of truth and good will to come to your aid... against the man who has been set up in your community as a Teacher and *Gaon*, yet supports doers of iniquity that throw off the yoke of the *Torah* and *mitsvoth* and have introduced new manners and practices unthought of by our holy forefathers. They are the sect of the suspect, the self-styled *hasidim* [i.e., pious ones]... The leaders and officers of the principal communities, together with the *Rabbanim* and *Geonim*, after giving great thought to the matter, have firmly resolved to fight zealously for the Lord of Hosts... to root out the thorns... and to disperse those wicked bands of men and drive them far away from their confines, and to put an end to their practices which are different from, and opposed to, the religion of our holy *Torah*. It is the Lord's will that they [sc. the leaders] have successfully stood firm in the breach... to subdue them and make them like the dust of the earth, so as firmly to establish the true faith... However, Satan is still at work among us... for the above-mentioned sect have spread... their uncleanness... so far that even the leaders of our community are till now members of the sect, and... follow the new practices... which they have introduced... We warned them in letters, informing them of the bans and excommunications... proclaimed by... the leaders... together with the *Rabbanim* and *Geonim*, against the above-mentioned sect and against those that support them... But the members of your community did not incline their ears and shut tight their eyes, even though there have always been in your community renowned and God-fearing men. Being oppressed by the supporters of the above-mentioned sect, they longed [to shake off the oppression] but had not the strength, until they could endure no more and determined to requite their adversaries. Whereupon the leaders of your community arose and took the courage... to lift up the stumbling-block and remove the stones from the highway, and they gave instructions to the *Gaon* in your community... It was desirable that you should take away the crown from the *Rav* and *Gaon*. But after we saw that you agreed not to dismiss him... we, too, confirmed your agreement, in the hope that he might turn back from his misguided way and no longer lead the people

⁸² Dubnow, *op. cit.*, p. 479. The chronology of his career as *Rav* and the various places in which he held his office are listed by H. Lieberman. 'Hearoth Bibliografyoth,' *Sefer ha-Yovel le-Alexander Marx*, p. 15 ff.

astray. But if he obstinately refuses . . . we have already admonished you in our letter and do so now again . . . We order you, according to the resolution of the province [sc. Lithuania], to remove the crown from the above-mentioned *Rav*, the *Av Beth-Din* of your community . . . He shall neither teach, nor judge . . . but shall be utterly expelled. As for their [sc. the sect's] fabrication that the true *Gaon* . . . R. Eliyahu (may his light shine out!), has changed his mind and that we, too, have had second thoughts about the bans . . . imposed till now, this is a lie and another crooked invention of theirs. On the contrary, every day their shame is publicly made known according to the books of the above-mentioned men [sc. of the sect] . . . We have always supported all the bans, that you should take care to observe what our whole province [sc. Lithuania] has undertaken to do—that the above-mentioned sect be neither seen nor found in our province—and should proclaim . . . in your community [sc. Pinsk] and the community of Karlin and the districts which are now under your jurisdiction, that, under pain of utter excommunication, no one shall perform . . . the abominations of that sect. And as for those that support and assist them . . . you shall draw up a list of their names and deeds, for they are a root from which poison grows and spreads. They that call their leader “Rebbe,” and he is the chief of sinners, in your community and in the whole community of Karlin and in the other communities under our jurisdiction, those men must be rooted out. Be strong . . . in zealously fighting the battle of the Lord of Hosts . . . and do not rest. We are confident that you will give heed to these our words and assert your authority in the land . . . to drive out the sinners . . . from the bounds of your holy land, to harass and pursue [the members of the sect] to the utmost of your power, and to utterly wipe out this filth. Such is our just request.

‘Written by the heads . . . of the holy community of Vilna . . . together with our Master, the Teacher and *Rav*, the great and renowned *Gaon*, the *Av Beth-Din* of the community of Vilna and also the great, pious and famed *Gaon*, Eliyahu (may his light shine forth!). In witness whereof we have signed our names on this fourth day of the week, the 6th *Tammuz*, [5]544 [=1784].

‘Shemuel, *Rav* of the above-mentioned holy community,
and Eliyahu, the son of R. Shelomo-Zalman of
blessed memory.’

This letter is dated ‘Wednesday, the 6th *Tammuz*, 5544 [=1784].’ No names are mentioned in the letter and there is an error—as Dubnow pointed out—in one detail of the date, since in the year 5544 the 6th *Tammuz* fell on a Friday, not a Wednesday. Nevertheless, there is no doubt that the following passages—‘the man who has been set up in your community as a Teacher and *Gaon*, yet supports doers of iniquity . . . to remove the crown from the above-mentioned *Rav*, the *Av Beth-Din* of your community . . . He shall neither teach nor judge’—must refer to R. Levi-Yitshak, since these appellations do not fit R. Shelomo of Karlin. The letter also throws some light on the sequence of events in Pinsk and on the attitude of the Pinsk community to R. Levi-Yitshak before his expulsion from the town. The Jews of Pinsk ‘did not incline their ears and shut tight their eyes’ to the warnings of the Vilna *kahal*, ‘being oppressed by the supporter of the above-mentioned sect.’ Even though ‘the leaders of your community [sc. Pinsk] arose and took the courage . . . to lift up the stumbling-block and remove the stones from the highway,’ and ‘it was desirable that you should take away the crown from the *Rav* and *Gaon*,’ nevertheless ‘you agreed not to dismiss him . . . we, too [sc. the Vilna *kahal*], confirmed your agreement, in the hope that he might turn back from his misguided way.’ From another sentence in the letter—‘As for their [sc. the sect's] fabrication that the true *Gaon*, the pious *Rav* R. Eliyahu . . . has changed his mind and that we, too, have had second thoughts about the bans’—we learn that, even at that time, the hasidim were already trying to spread it abroad that the *Gaon* of Vilna had revised his hostile opinion about them, a step which he did not actually take, as we know, until ten years later.

At this very time—according to one document, on the 8th *Tammuz*, 1784—R. Levi-Yitshak was violently attacked by the *Rav* of Brest-Litovsk, R. Avraham Katzenellenbogen, in a bitterly-worded open letter.⁸³ The ‘officers of the *kahal*’ in Pinsk this time acceded to the demand of the leaders of the Vilna *kahal* that ‘he shall be utterly expelled.’ R. Levi-Yitshak would appear to have continued to feel an attachment to Pinsk and to have hoped to return there one day, since he signed his approval of the work *Meir Nethivim* by R. Meir Margolioth (Polonnoye 1791), dated the 4th *Iyyar*, 1791, as follows: ‘*Av Beth-Din* and *Rav* of the holy community of Pinsk and the district,

⁸³ Dubnow, *Kithvei Hithnagduth*, op. cit., p. 293.

at present *Av Beth-Din* of the holy community of Berdichev.' This is exactly the same formula as that used by R. Shelomo of Karlin, when he signed his approval of the book *Kether Shem Tov*: 'Shelomo of Karlin, at present in the holy community of Ludmir.' But the two men never returned to their respective towns.

Karlin was thus left without a *Tsaddik*. Of R. Shelomo's life in Ludmir very little is known, and we have to rely on hasidic oral traditions. His authority as a disciple of the Great *Maggid* and of R. Aharon the Great must have helped him in rapidly gathering a new circle of disciples and followers. His adherents in Polesia, who remained faithful to him, must also have visited him regularly in his place of exile. His loyal disciples, R. Asher (the son of R. Aharon the Great) and R. Mordekhai of Lakhovich, accompanied their Rebbe to Ludmir; and there he was apparently joined by a third disciple, R. Uri of Strelisk. R. Shelomo left no written works, unlike others of the Great *Maggid's* disciples, but teachings attributed to him and legends about him can be found in the following works by his own disciples: *Imrei Kadosh ha-Shalem* by R. Uri of Strelisk (Lvov, no date of publication), and *Beth Aharon* by R. Aharon (the Second) of Karlin (Brody, 1875).⁸⁴ All his life he was known as 'R. Shelomo of Karlin,' and that is the name by which he is referred to in hasidic writings down to the present day.

R. Shelomo died a martyr's death during the wars between Russia and Poland, on the 22nd *Tammuz*, 1792. Many legends have grown up around his death. One of them, which is true to his spiritual nature, runs as follows: During the war between Russia and Poland, the Russian commander gave his troops per-

mission to do as they pleased with the Jews of Ludmir for two hours. This was on the Sabbath eve, when almost all the Jews of the town had taken refuge in the synagogue in which R. Shelomo of Karlin was in the habit of praying. R. Shelomo was standing by the table and saying the *kiddush* [blessing over the wine] with his usual intense devotion. Just then, a lame Cossack passed by the synagogue and aimed his rifle at R. Shelomo. R. Shelomo's small grandson, who was standing next to him, saw what was happening and tugged at R. Shelomo's robe to rouse him from his trance. At that same moment the Cossack fired at him and wounded him. R. Shelomo said that if his grandson had not roused him from his trance of devotion, the Cossack would not have had the power to harm him. The hasidim wanted to take R. Shelomo out of the synagogue, but he refused to move until he had finished sanctifying the Sabbath. When he had finished his prayer, they laid him on a bed, and while they were dressing his wound he asked for the *Zohar* to be brought to him. The volume remained open in front of him till his soul departed.

The hasidic legend adds that the lame Cossack was actually Armilus who, according to the *Midrash*, is to kill the Messiah the son of Joseph [the Messiah of suffering who was to precede the Messiah the son of David]. R. Shelomo himself used to say: 'I am ready to be the Messiah the son of Joseph, provided that the Messiah the son of David comes at last.' The hasidim believe that every generation has its Messiah the son of Joseph, who by his sufferings and devotion brings nearer the final redemption, and R. Shelomo was this Messiah in his generation. His nameless grave was dug in Ludmir. Over it there is an *ohel* [structure over the grave] containing a large stone with two holes in which written requests can be placed, and a narrow opening for the lighting of a *ner tamid* [perpetual light]. The hasidim used reverently to point out the place where R. Shelomo, for twenty years the leader of Karlin hasidism, was laid to rest after a life full of trials and tribulations.

In addition to his role as Rebbe and spiritual guide in a period of crisis, R. Shelomo's other great claim to a place of honour in the history of Lithuanian hasidism was that he provided it with its future leaders. After his death, the 'Karliners' overcame the opposition of the *mithnagdim* and achieved equal and independent status in communal affairs. By the 1790s Karlin hasidism was already enjoying its second hey-

⁸⁴ Teachings attributed to R. Shelomo of Karlin and legends about him were collected and published by Y. M. Kleinbaum in his book *Shema Shelomo* (two parts), Petrokov 1928. However, this apocryphal work cannot be regarded as original source-material. The first part contains *hanhagoth* [rules for good conduct] and hasidic teachings attributed to R. Shelomo of Karlin, most of them from the volume *Beth Aharon* by R. Aharon of Karlin. The second part contains hasidic writings and traditional lore. Here and there in these legendary tales an echo of certain historical events can be heard. The sayings and stories about R. Shelomo quoted in this chapter have been taken from the books *Beth Aharon* by R. Aharon of Karlin, and *Imrei Kadosh ha-Shalem*, attributed to R. Uri of Strelisk, and also from the book *Shema Shlomo*.

day, which R. Shelomo had not been spared to see. Two of his disciples, R. Asher and R. Mordekhai, returned to Polesia and established hasidic centres there. What R. Shelomo himself had been unable to do was achieved by his disciples and their successors, who, at the end of the eighteenth century and throughout the nineteenth, succeeded in propagating the doctrine of hasidism not only in Lithuania and White Russia (R. Asher of Stolin, R. Mordekhai and R. Noah of Lakhovich, R. Shelomo-Hayyim of Koidanov, R. Moshe of Kobrin, R. Avraham of Slonim), but also in Volhynia (R. Moshe, the son of R. Shelomo, and his descendants) and Galicia (R. Uri of Strelisk, R. Yehudah-Tsevi of Stretin).

C. *The Second Ascendancy of Karlin Hasidism*
(1792-1794)

After R. Shelomo left Karlin and moved to Ludmir (before 1784), his followers in Karlin remained faithful to their Rebbe and his teachings. The hasidic way of life and mutual loyalty instilled into the Karlin hasidim by R. Aharon the Great proved strong enough to withstand the mithnaged excommunications and persecutions (in the period 1772-1781), just as the hasidism of neighbouring White Russia withstood the decrees passed by the mithnaged assemblies in Shklov and Mohilev (1784). Although the mithnagdim impeded the spread of hasidism in Lithuania and undoubtedly slowed the pace of its development, they could not check it entirely. The number of Karlin hasidim in the second half of the 1780s, and particularly in the first half of the 1790s, steadily increased, until by 1793 they were strong enough to advance from passive to active resistance. Characteristically enough, the Karlin hasidim began their fight in the small towns, most of whose inhabitants were already hasidim, directing their offensive against the mithnaged community of Pinsk and, more particularly, its *Rav*, R. Avigdor, who was also *Rav* of the entire district.

R. Avigdor the son of R. Yosef-Hayyim—in Russian documents 'Haimovich'—had formerly been *Rav* of the little town of Lesli in Poland, and was probably called to the Rabbinate of Pinsk and its district in 1785. This date can be inferred from the petition presented by him to the Russian government in 1800, in which he writes that the hasidim 'drew out the

matter for almost six more years,' in addition to the one year that had passed after his deposition. It follows, then, that R. Avigdor was removed from the position of *Rav* in Pinsk seven years before he presented his petition—that is, in 1793. In another place R. Avigdor writes that he paid a large sum to obtain the post of *Rav* in Pinsk for a period of ten years, and that he lent money without interest to the Pinsk community for the same period of time. He then adds: 'This sect... expelled me with great ignominy two years before my appointed time,' i.e., after he had served as *Rav* of Pinsk for eight years. From this it would follow that R. Avigdor was appointed *Rav* of Pinsk in 1785. This inference accords with the conclusion reached above concerning the year of R. Levi Yitshak's expulsion from Pinsk and his withdrawal to Berdichev, for hasidic sources assume that it was R. Avigdor that was responsible for this expulsion.⁸⁵ R. Avigdor's approval of R. Eliezer the son of R. Meir Halevi's book *Siah ha-Sadeh* (Shklov 1787) is dated 1787, and his approval of the work *Reiah ha-Sadeh* by the same author (Shklov 1795) is dated 1791, both of them being signed by him in his capacity as the Pinsk *Av Beth-Din*. It will be remembered that Rabbi Eliezer son of R. Meir Halevi, 'the *Rav* of the synagogue and *Moreh-Tsedek* of the holy community of Pinsk, was one of the first persecutors of the hasidim in Pinsk, as early as the time of R. Aharon the Great, and, as has been described above, it was to him that the Great *Maggid* of Mezerich appealed concerning these persecutions. The joint opposition to hasidism of the *Moreh-Tsedek* and of the *Av Beth-Din*, of the author of the two volumes and the writer of the approvals to them, apparently brought the two men closer together.

Chronological considerations apart, the date of R. Avigdor's appointment as *Rav* in Pinsk cannot be placed any earlier, since the description of contemporary events given in his petition does not accord with the difficult plight of Karlin hasidism during the period of the first and second bans pronounced against them (1772-1781), nor with the time of R. Shelomo's departure from Karlin (c. 1784). The fact that R. Avigdor occupied the Pinsk rabbinical office which a short time before had been occupied by the *Rav* R. Rafael Hacoheh Hamburger, and also the fact that he was asked to give his approval of books, is evidence that he was widely known as a great talmudic scholar and halakhic authority.

⁸⁵ Heilman, *Beth Rabbi*, Pt. I, pp. 8, 9; and other writers.

R. Avigdor's petition (in Russian to the Russian government), written in 1800, is an important document for our understanding of the development of Karlin hasidism during the last fifteen years of the eighteenth century, containing as it does important details about the struggle of those years, especially in Pinsk itself.⁸⁶

In the passages describing the situation in Pinsk and its surroundings, including Karlin, we read as follows:

'...I am now emboldened to lay my petition in fear and awe before your Majesty's revered throne. I confess that, when I was chosen *Av Beth-Din* of Pinsk and of the thirty small towns belonging to the city [i.e., the district], I did not wish to have any dealings whatsoever with the sect that had arisen there, and I was pleased not to have any. However, I endeavoured, through preaching, to persuade them to return from their errings to the right way, but when I saw that this effort had no effect on them at all, and when there came into my hands their clandestinely printed books in which law and justice were most insolently distorted, I was perplexed in mind, for I did not know how to frustrate their designs. Even though I was the *Av Beth-Din*, I no longer had the power to burn their books publicly, for in all the towns under my jurisdiction the majority already belonged to that sect.

'I was accordingly obliged to inform the late *Gaon*, R. Eliyahu of Vilna, of what had happened, since he was the greatest of our Sages, both in revealed teaching [*Talmud*] and in hidden lore [*Kabbalah*]. I told him of the contents of the books of this sect and requested wise counsel from him, for I feared that since their books contain for the most part vain and insolent words, and since they call themselves our brethren, the matter might come to the notice of the authorities, and therefore [action must be taken] to prevent the innocent from suffering for the crimes of evil-doers. Moreover, I proved to him [sc. the Vilna *Gaon*] that, since their books lead the simple man astray from the straight way, according to the Mosaic Law their books should be publicly burnt in the presence

of all the people. And this was indeed done in Vilna, where the order was given to burn the books of this sect in public in front of the synagogue [*Tsavvaath ha-Ribash*]. When this became known to the sect and they discovered that I was opposed to their ideas, they rose up as one man against me, and deprived me of my livelihood, and even eventually incited the others [sc. the *mithnagdim*] not to give me my due. For who would not lend a willing ear to such advice? And so I was greatly impoverished. In the three towns of Zlobin, Stolin and Dobrovich, which were under my jurisdiction but where the heads of the community were in each case members of this sect, they many times prevailed on the local authorities to forbid me to set foot in them. Afterwards they grew stronger and more numerous in Pinsk and, before the term of my appointment had come to an end and it was time to choose another *Av Beth-Din*, they took the post from me by force and, to my great shame, removed the chair intended for my use from the synagogue, and on the place where it had stood scattered sand and earth... According to the religion of Israel it is a custom among us that he who serves as *Av Beth-Din*, even if he has been appointed for a certain period only, cannot be dismissed [from his position as *Rav* before the end of his term of office]. But the sect did not observe this custom, and expelled me with great ignominy two years before the appointed time, and deprived me of all my income. When I saw how they were treating me, without consulting me, unlawfully, I laid a complaint against them, in accordance with your Majesty's decree, before the magistrate, who ordered that it be publicly announced in our synagogue that I was to remain in the rabbinical seat until the court should pronounce its decision. In furtherance of the execution of this order, the magistrate sent his secretary to the synagogue to announce his decision in person. When this became known to the sect, they determined, on solemn oath, to bring about the annulment of the magistrate's decision. They chose one of their persuasion as head of the community and, when the secretary tried to enter the synagogue in order to announce [the magistrate's decision], they took up their stand in front of him and did not let him enter.

'According to Your Majesty's exalted decree it is laid down that, in every town where there are people of our religion, the *Rabbanim* shall be the judges in all matters pertaining to our faith. They [sc. the *Rab-*

⁸⁶ Dubnow, *Yevreyskaya Starina*, Vol. III, p. 84 ff., St. Petersburg 1910. On 'the lease of the Rabbinate of Pinsk in Lithuania... for ten years and also [the giving of] a loan to the community of 400 *chervontsy* without interest for the duration of that period,' see Dubnow, *Toledoth ha-Hasiduth*, p. 276.

banim] must be men of learning. But the sect dismissed them [sc. the men of learning] and chose in their stead the people they wished, totally lacking in experience. They elected Hershel Kolodner as head of the community, only because he and his family belonged to the sect. He travelled to the governor of the province, Neplyuyev, and in return for libellous tale-bearing against me obtained an injunction not to pay me the remainder of the salary due to me, both for the last six years and for the years before that. Further, he [sc. Hershel Kolodner] ordered, and this too in the name of the governor of the province, that it be publicly announced that everyone whom I had either treated dishonestly or from whom I had taken money unlawfully should make a declaration to this effect in the town hall before the governor of the province. Despite the profound humiliation caused me by this order, I was glad of it, for I was sure that even among the sect there would not be a single person capable of saying ill of me. I had never favoured a wealthy man, if he was guilty, and thereby ignored the rights of a poor man. On the contrary, I had always wished, to the utmost of my ability, to help the poor. When a full year had passed after the publication of this same announcement and no complaints against me had been received, the governor of the province issued me a certificate of probity. After the town council had thus been convinced that I was in the right, my enemies drew out the matter for almost six more years. All this time I did not cease to demand the 3,000 *chervontsy*. And although I subsequently went to Minsk more than ten times, and showed the town council [in Pinsk] the order issued by the governor of the province and by the governor-general, Tutelman [Tutolmin], my efforts have still not borne fruit. My case drags on and on, and meanwhile I have been so greatly impoverished that I have been forced to sell all my possessions. I and my family have been left in utter destitution. But I have not lost my faith in Almighty God, as it is written: "If you do afflict them, and they cry out to me, I will surely hear their cry" [Exodus xxii, 22]. I have placed my trust in our exalted laws, that offer refuge to the oppressed. And, indeed, who is better fitted to do this [sc. to offer refuge to the oppressed] than our mighty master, the Tsar Paul I? . . .

'. . . It is, therefore, with a heart bursting with indignation that I humbly and respectfully present this petition to Your Majesty. In years past I was rich,

whereas now, in my old age, I have been reduced to poverty together with all my family. I therefore wait hopefully for Your Majesty's decision, seeing that it is beyond my power to demonstrate by witnesses the harm done to me by the sect . . .'

The state of Karlin hasidism, both in the 'principal community' of Pinsk itself and in the small towns in the surrounding district, is well summed-up in the following sentences from R. Avidgor's petition: 'Afterwards they [sc. the hasidim] grew stronger and more numerous in Pinsk . . . They chose one of their persuasion as head of the community . . . They even eventually incited the others [sc. the *mithnagdim*] not to give me my due . . . The heads of the community [in the three towns] were in each case members of this sect.'

The struggle against hasidism was waged by the *mithnagdim*, from the start, as a 'holy war' fought for the purpose of rooting-out a dangerous heresy. In this war, R. Avidgor sought the aid of the *Gaon* of Vilna, since in the hasidic books, which were 'clandestinely printed,' 'law and justice were most insolently distorted' and the 'books contain for the most part vain and insolent words' which 'lead the simple man astray from the straight way.' In the end, the struggle spread outside the confines of the community in which it had begun. R. Avidgor sought the protection of the Russian authorities, and the hasidim retaliated by doing the same. The removal of R. Avidgor from the position of *Rav* in Pinsk took place, as has already been shown, in 1793.⁸⁷ This year, then, is to be regarded as the year of the victory of Karlin hasidism over its opponents.

This growth in the influence and power of the Karlin hasidim in Pinsk and its surroundings must certainly have been known to the disciples of R. Shelomo of Karlin, with whom the Karlin hasidim presumably maintained contact. R. Shelomo's successor in Ludmir was his son, R. Moshe. In the writings and history of hasidism neither this R. Moshe nor his

⁸⁷ Hessen is of the opinion that the deposition of R. Avidgor from the office of *Rav* occurred in 1794-1795; Hessen, *Yevreyi v Rossiye*, p. 151, n., St. Petersburg 1906.

In Dobrovich—i.e., Dombrovitsi—which is mentioned by R. Avidgor in his appeal to the Russian government as having refused him entry, there was a *shulkhen* [prayer-house] of Karlin hasidim, built in the first quarter of the nineteenth century. *Yevreyskaya Entsiklopediya*, Vol. VII, s.v.: Dombrovitsi.

descendants—his son, R. Shelomo; his grandson, R. Nahum; and his great-grandson, R. Gedalyah—figure at all prominently. These descendants became *Tsaddikim* of the not so large Jewish community in Ludmir and the surrounding district, but only thanks to the reflected glory of their ancestor, R. Shelomo of Karlin. Two of R. Shelomo's disciples, R. Asher and R. Mordekhai, went after their master's death to R. Barukh of Mezhibozh,⁸⁸ the grandson of the Besht and the father of R. Shelomo's daughter-in-law. R. Asher was also, for a short time, a disciple of the *Maggid*, R. Yisrael of Kozhenits.⁸⁹ The study of hasidic doctrine as propounded by these two leading advocates of *tsaddikism*, R. Barukh of Mezhibozh and R. Yisrael of Kozhenits, must undoubtedly have had an effect on the future leaders of the hasidim of Polesia.

R. Asher apparently at first lacked the courage to return to his native province, Polesia. He lived for a short time in Zhelikhov, which seems to have led to a dispute between him and R. Levi-Yitshak of Berdichev.⁹⁰ Amongst the 'holy writings' of the Karlin *Tsaddikim* in the Stolin *genizah*, there was a letter from R. Asher to R. Yisrael of Kozhenits in which mention is made of the Zhelikhov dispute.⁹¹ This letter also informs us that R. Asher was one of the disciples of R. Yisrael of Kozhenits. From Zhelikhov R. Asher returned to his native province, but evidently felt that the time was not yet ripe for him to go to Karlin itself and to try to revive the hasidic centre there. He therefore first made his way to the nearby small town of Stolin where he remained for a while, only later (after 1810) returning to Karlin. The exact date of R. Asher's arrival in Stolin is difficult to determine. In *Sefer ha-Vikkuah*, the work of R. Yisrael-Leibel published in 1798, the author makes no mention at all of R. Asher, though he does mention—and even challenges to a public debate—the two other *Tsaddikim* of the same region of Lithuania: R. Mor-

dekhai of Lakhovich, and R. Shemuel, the son of R. Hayyim-Heikel of Amdur. Nor is there any reference to R. Asher in R. Avigdor's written petition of 1800, in which he recounts how he was not allowed to set foot in Stolin, describes in detail the 'holy war' declared against him by the hasidim, and demands that the 'Karliner leaders' be imprisoned. As against this, the hasidic tradition informs us, in connection with 'the fifth light' of *Hanukkah* (see below), that in 1798 R. Asher was being held in prison together with R. Mordekhai of Lakhovich. In a letter from R. Asher to R. Yisrael of Kozhenits, written (as will be shown below) between 1801–1802 and 1807, the address is explicitly given as Stolin. Stolin, as already stated, was one of the three small towns that closed their gates to R. Avigdor, since the majority of its Jewish community and their leaders were Karlin hasidim.

From the time that R. Asher settled in Stolin he became known throughout the hasidic world as 'R. Asher of Karlin or Stolin'; and the Karlin hasidim were henceforth called, in addition to 'Karliners,' 'Stolin hasidim.'

R. Shelomo of Karlin's second disciple, R. Mordekhai, chose as his place of residence the small town of Lakhovich (also in Polesia) which, according to the administrative division given in the '*Pinkas* of the Province of Lithuania,' came under the jurisdiction of the Pinsk community.⁹² Stolin and Lakhovich immediately became hasidic centres on the border between Lithuania and White Russia.

R. Shelomo of Karlin's third disciple, R. Uri, was also installed as Rebbe. He settled in the small town of Strelisk in Galicia.⁹³ From hasidic writings we learn that R. Uri was one of the *Tsaddikim* that aspired and attained to lofty purity of soul, in the spirit and after the manner of the first teachers of hasidism. His character is still a living influence in hasidic doctrine. On account of his fervently impassioned manner of praying, which he learnt from his master, R. Shelomo of Karlin, he is still known in hasidic circles as 'the Seraph.'⁹⁴

⁸⁸ *Beth Aharon* by R. Aharon of Karlin, p. 27; Kleinbaum, *Shema Shelomo*, Pt. II, p. 42. On descendants of R. Shelomo of Karlin, see: Valden, *Shem ha-Gedolim he-Hadash*, p. 104, s.v. Moshe... of... Lodmir; L. Grossman, *Shem u-Sheerith*, p. 69, 90, Tel Aviv 1943; S. N. Gottlieb, *Oholei Shem*, p. 264, Pinsk 1912; A. Hausman, *Divrei Aharon*, p. 252, Jerusalem 1962, and *Birkath Aharon*, p. 11, Jerusalem 1970; *Toledoth Anshei Shem*, Pt. I, ed. A. Z. Rand, p. 18, s.v. Uri-Aharon Gottlieb and Moshe Gottlieb, New York 1950.

⁸⁹ Kleinbaum, *op. cit.*, Pt. II, pp. 26, 30. V. *infr.*

⁹⁰ Kleinbaum, *op. cit.*, Pt. II, pp. 26, 42.

⁹¹ V. *infr.*

⁹² *Pinkas Medinath Lita*, ed. Dubnow, p. 18, Berlin 1952.

⁹³ [Bodek], *Seder ha-Doroth mi-Talmidei ha-Besht*, pp. 66–68.

⁹⁴ Kleinman, *Mazkereth Shem ha-Gedolim*, pp. 134–142; [Y. Berger], *Eser Tsahtsahoth*, pp. 76–83, Petrokov 1910; *Imrei Kadosh ha-Shalem... Uri ha-Saraf mi-Strelisk*, collected by... B. Z. Shenblum, Lvov (no date of publication).

R. Asher in Stolin and R. Mordekhai in Lakhovich soon made a name for themselves throughout Polesia, and even outside its borders. R. Mordekhai of Lakhovich is mentioned in the polemical pamphlets *Zimrath Am ha-Arets* and *Shever Posheim*; and the well-known fanatical mithnaged, R. Yisrael-Leibel, writes in his work *Sefer ha-Vikkuah* (published in 1798) that R. Mordekhai had a great influence on the hasidim, who believed in his 'wonders.' Thus, for example, they were sure that it was only through the influence of R. Mordekhai that the provincial governor, Radziwil, was dismissed from his post because of his hostility to the hasidim, and another governor appointed in his place. Amongst the *Tsaddikim* whom R. Yisrael-Leibel challenged to a public debate on 'the perverse ways of hasidism' we find—together with the *Tsaddikim* of Amdur, Ladi and Chernobyl—also R. Mordekhai of Lakhovich, who had gained adherents even in the stronghold of rabbinism—in Vilna.⁹⁵

This was the second period of ascendancy for Karlin hasidism. The first such period, in the time of R. Aharon the Great (1765–1772), had provoked a violent mithnaged reaction which had plunged Karlin hasidism into a crisis lasting twenty long years (1772–1792). This time, the offensive was started by the hasidim and ended in their victory, the first fruits of which were the deposition of R. Avigdor and their own achievement of equal communal rights. By virtue of their determined struggle for equal and independent status in the 'principal communities' of Lithuania, the Karlin hasidim occupy a special place in the history of the mithnaged-hasidic conflict and of the hasidic movement as a whole. It was they that actually transformed the mithnaged attack on the hasidim into a hasidic attack on the mithnagdim. From now onwards it only remained for them to obtain *de jure* recognition of the equality of communal status that they had previously gained *de facto*. However, the mithnagdim also showed that they were determined not to give up the struggle. The Karlin hasidim were therefore obliged, together with other branches of the movement, to fight a further bitter engagement with the *Rabbanim* and the *kahals*, which ended in their final victory only in the year 1801. The Pinsk Rav, R. Avigdor, was once again in the forefront of the fray on the

mithnaged side together with the Vilna *kahal*. Although, on the hasidic side this last engagement was actually fought mainly by the founder of *Habad* hasidism, R. Shneur-Zalman of Ladi, and not by the Karlin hasidim, yet in all the relevant documents R. Shneur-Zalman is referred to as 'the leader of the Karliners.'

D. *Struggle and Victory* (1794–1801)

The spread of hasidism in the province of Polesia in the nineties of the eighteenth century is a clear indication that, by this time, the Jewish masses had already changed their originally extremely unfavourable attitude to the hasidic movement. Through daily contact with the hasidim, the ordinary Jew had grown used to their peculiar customs and characteristics, and had thus ceased to feel 'the danger from hasidism' against which his spiritual leaders, the rabbis, were continually fulminating. The thirty years of the existence of hasidism had provided empirical proof that the religious and social innovations instituted by the new movement had not resulted in a schism in Judaism, or even in any serious divergence from its norms. It is possible that hasidism would have developed differently and would not have contented itself with merely introducing slight changes in the form of the prayers and in the way of life of the individual Jew and the whole community, if it had not met with such violent opposition at the start. Moreover, the changes that hasidism underwent in its own internal development at this same time—the nineties of the eighteenth century—also helped to dispel the fear of the 'hasidic threat.' By then, the doctrines of the first hasidic teachers about the nature of Judaism and the way of life to be followed by the believer had already undergone a contraction, the main emphasis now being laid on *tsaddikism*—the belief in the *Tsaddik* as 'the true foundation of the world,' and in the material effectiveness of his prayer and blessing, and his power thereby to help the individual in time of need. In the psychology of the ordinary, simple Jew this belief now became the principal doctrine of hasidism.

This internal development in hasidism resulted in an increase in the numbers of the movement's adherents. The popular belief in the sanctity and efficacy of the individual *Tsaddik* was such that, as soon as a *Tsaddik* (who was usually the son or disciple of another *Tsaddik*) took up residence in some place, a number of the local inhabitants became hasidim. The

⁹⁵ Dubnow, *Toledoth ha-Hasiduth*, pp. 223, 224, n. 457; Zweifel, *op. cit.*, Pt. II, p. 48; Rabinowitsch, *op. cit.*, p. 151.

main tenet of their hasidism was their belief in the *Tsaddik* (or 'Rebbe'), whom they regarded as a saint and who was for them a greater religious authority than the official spiritual leader of their community, the local *Rav*. These are the factors that explain the extent to which R. Asher of Stolin and R. Mordekhai of Lakhovich succeeded in spreading the hasidic doctrine in the nineties in Polesia. The growing strength of the hasidim went hand in hand with the steady decline of their rivals, the *kahal*. Indeed, even in the stronghold of mithnagdism, in Vilna itself, the number of hasidim apparently increased in the years from 1790 onwards, to judge from the fact that in this period we find hasidim among the members of the *kahal*. In their struggle to free themselves from the jurisdiction of the official *kahal*, the hasidim took advantage of the latter's moral decline: the essentially religious character of this struggle was thus almost completely overshadowed by secular issues, such as the embezzlements of public funds by the leaders of the *kahal*, and the like. At first, the hasidim had attacked the arrogance of the rabbinical scholars. Now, in the latter part of the struggle, their onslaught was directed against the despotic rule of the *kahal*. Here the hasidim were considerably helped by the restrictions imposed on the independent authority of the *kahal*, partly by the government of Poland during that country's last period of independence, and partly by the Russian government after the last partition of Poland. With their powers thus reduced, the leaders of the *kahal* tried to gain the support of the Russian authorities, and for this purpose employed political arguments in their controversy with the hasidim. In this way, the struggle between the hasidim and the *kahal*, which had originally been essentially religious, now took on an additional political and social character.

A very important part in the last stages of this conflict was played, as already stated, by the leaders of the Vilna *kahal*, the Pinsk *Av Beth-Din*, R. Avigdor, and R. Shneur-Zalman of Ladi. For the first three years—i.e., from 1794 till the death of the Vilna *Gaon* in 1797—the main struggle took place in Lithuania. Then, in 1798, it was transferred to St. Petersburg, where it finally ended in 1801.

In 1794, after the Karlin hasidim in Pinsk had defeated their bitter enemy, R. Avigdor, the Minsk *kahal* decided—as we know from the community records [*pinkas*])—to ban all prayer-meetings of the ha-

sidic *minyán*.⁹⁶ A year later, the provincial governor at Minsk, one Tutolmin, who was well versed in the details of this sectarian conflict and supported the hasidim, persuaded the Empress Catherine II to promulgate a decree greatly reducing the powers of the *kahal*.⁹⁷ That same year, the communities of Grodno and Vilna, realising the separatist aims of the hasidim, appealed to the Russian government to recognise the elected *kahal* as the sole legally authorised representative of the Jewish population.⁹⁸ Meanwhile, the hasidim had managed to circulate large numbers of copies of their writings, in particular *Tsavaath ha-Ribash*.

They also spread abroad a story to the effect that the Vilna *Gaon* now regretted his hounding of the hasidim; while at the same time a young scholar, who gave himself out to be the *Gaon's* son, travelled from town to town affirming the truth of this story. These acts of the hasidim still further incensed the mithnagdism against them, and at a meeting of the leaders of the Lithuanian communities in Vilna (June, 1796), under the presidency of the Vilna *Gaon*, it was decided to take more stringent measures against the hasidim. A letter was sent out, signed by the *Gaon* and reaffirming his previous attitude to the hasidim. In this letter the threat to Judaism from hasidism is once again stressed and the Jews are once more called on to root out hasidism from their midst.⁹⁹ Two special envoys, R. Hayyim and R. Saadyah, set out with this letter for the communities of Lithuania and White Russia, in order to display it publicly to the Jewish population there. When the letter reached Minsk, the hasidim rumoured it abroad that the *Gaon's* signature was a forgery and that the letter was not his at all. The Minsk community immediately appealed to Vilna for confirmation of the *Gaon's* signature, at the same time complaining that the hasidim had greatly increased in numbers in the provinces of Vilna and Słomim. In response to this request, on the day after *Yom*

⁹⁶ For details of the part played by the communities of White Russia, in co-operation with those of Lithuania, in the struggle against hasidism in the nineties of the eighteenth century, see Dubnow, *Toledoth ha-Hasiduth*, p. 220.

⁹⁷ Hessen, *Yevreyi v Rossiye*, p. 157 ff.

⁹⁸ *Akty Izdavayemyye Vilenskoyu Kommissiyeyu dla Razbora Drevnikh Aktov*, Vol. XXIX, no. 244, Vilna 1902.

⁹⁹ Dubnow, '*Kithvei Hithnagduth*,' *op. cit.*, p. 302, Letter No. 4, of the Vilna community.

Kippur 1796, the *Gaon* sent the provincial communities of Lithuania, White Russia, Volhynia and Podolia a letter denouncing the hasidim still more violently. The letter was again carried by envoys. The reason for the specially vigorous anti-hasidic activity of the Minsk community was that the hasidim had become particularly numerous in this province, which included Pinsk, Karlin, Stolin and Lakhovich. Two weeks after the receipt of the *Gaon's* letter, the Minsk community published a proclamation to all the communities in the Minsk province¹⁰⁰—and no doubt also to the community of Pinsk—demanding that strong action be taken against the hasidim, and that they should not be allowed to travel to their 'Rebbs.'¹⁰¹ This proclamation was publicly read out in the synagogues and *batei midrash* of Minsk. At the same time, the Lithuanian *Maggid* and mithnaged, R. Yisrael-Leibel, was delivering his anti-hasidic sermons in the synagogues, and his *Sefer Vikkuah* was published with the approval of the Minsk *Av Beth-Din* (1798). As already stated, this book denounces R. Mordekhai of Lakhovich as a demagogic agitator whose aim was to lead good Jews astray. The hasidim resorted to burning the proclamations and driving out the envoys. Thus, sectarian passions were once more roused in Lithuania when, at the height of the tension (1797), the Vilna *Gaon* suddenly died.

From this point onwards the struggle between the two sections of the Jewish population was waged with the participation of the Russian authorities. The *kahal* realised that its weapons—excommunications, proclamations, and the like—made too little impression to be effective. At the same time, the hasidim for their part saw that their chief enemy was now the *kahal*, which derived its powers from the secular authorities. When, after the *Gaon's* death, the third excommunication of the 'Karliners' [i.e., hasidim] was proclaimed in the Vilna synagogues to the accompaniment of blasts on the *shofar*, an order was immediately published by the governor of the province in Vilna, Friesel, forbidding any proclamation of a *herem*.¹⁰² Obviously this prohibition was issued at the instigation of the hasidim and testifies to the decline in the power

of the *kahal* and the extent of the influence of the hasidim at that time. The Vilna community now set up a special committee to continue the struggle. Anti-hasidic feelings rose to a new height of intensity, following a rumour that the hasidim had gone wild with joy after the death of the Vilna *Gaon*.

In 1798, the leader of the 'Karliners' in White Russia, R. Shneur-Zalman of Ladi—in the Russian documents, 'Zalman Borukhovich' [i.e., son of Barukh]—and the *Tsaddikim* of the 'Karliner' sect in Lithuania were indicted before the Supreme Court in St. Petersburg as revolutionaries. On the basis of this indictment, the public prosecutor ordered 'that the whole affair thoroughly investigated and that Rabbi Borukhovich's leading assistants be brought under heavy guard to St. Petersburg... Immediately after this, twenty-two of the "Karliners" were imprisoned in Vilna and other districts. Seven of them, who were among Rabbi Borukhovich's chief aides, were left in prison here [sc. in Vilna]... The seven Jews sent to St. Petersburg... were stopped on the way at Riga and returned [to Vilna]... After an investigation of the Jewish sect of the Karliners, and after the explanations provided by R. Zalman Borukhovich, His Royal Highness the Tsar decreed... since he did not find in their acts [sc. of the "Karliners"] anything harmful to the State, that they all be set free... but that a close watch be kept on their actions and those of their associates... After this, all the adherents of the sect still in prison were released.'¹⁰³

According to hasidic tradition, R. Asher of Stolin and R. Mordekhai of Lakhovich were among those imprisoned.¹⁰⁴ The day of their release, which happened to be the fifth day of Hanukkah, became a day of rejoicing for the Karlin and Lakhovich hasidim and was given the name of 'the fifth light.'¹⁰⁵ On this day the hasidim used to gather in their *shtiebel*, eat *latkes* [potato-pancakes], drink and sing, and recount the miracle of the Rebbe's release. Avraham-Baer

¹⁰³ For the report 'on the sect of the Karliners' sent by the Governor of the Lithuanian province to the Attorney-General, see Dubnow, *Yevreyskaya Starina*, Vol. III, p. 257 ff.

¹⁰⁴ Heilman, *Beth Rabbi*, Pt. II, p. 54, n. 1, and the sources quoted in the following note.

¹⁰⁵ *Yevreyskaya Entsiklopediya*, Vol. XIV, p. 570, s.v.: *Stolinskiye Tsaddiki*; W. Z. Rabinowitsch, '19 Kislev ve-Hey Hanukkah,' *Haolam*, 26th year, No. 13, Jerusalem 1937; I. Tishby, *Tsevi Herman Shapira—ke-Sofer ha-Haskalah*, *Molad*, Vol. IV, p. 575, n. 95, Jerusalem 1972.

¹⁰⁰ On 'the provincial *kahal*, see Dubnow, 'Kithvei Hithnagduth,' *op. cit.*, p. 301; *Idem*, *Toledoth ha-Hasiduth*, p. 161.

¹⁰¹ Dubnow, 'Kithvei Hithnagduth,' *op. cit.*, pp. 299–302, Letter No. 3.

¹⁰² Hessen, *Istoriya Yevreyskogo Naroda v Rossiye*, Vol. I, p. 106, Leningrad 1925.

Gottlober records this in his reminiscences, which contain interesting and typical details. He writes: 'An old man from Vilna, R. Zalman Miliater, told me that, when the Vilna *Gaon* departed this life... the mithnagdim brought a false accusation against seven of the leading hasidim, pillars of this community... who were then imprisoned and condemned to be deported to Siberia. When they were taken away from Vilna under military guard, the leaders of the Vilna community added to this another, Jewish guard, to make sure that the hasidim should not escape by bribing the soldiers. As they were passing through a small town, they entered a Jewish house and asked for something to eat. They were given *terefah* [ritually unclean] food, since the Jews said to themselves: "They're 'Karliners' (the name given by the Lithuanian Jewish masses to the hasidim), aren't they, so why should they eat ritually slaughtered [*kasher*] meat?..." This incident shows that the quarrel between the two groups had become so bitter that they were almost split into two separate peoples. Thanks to representations made to the authorities, the seven prisoners were returned [to Vilna] from Riga; and the fifth light is still a day of rejoicing for Lithuanian hasidim.¹⁰⁶ The institution of a special festive day to mark the occasion testifies to the historical truth of the imprisonment of the Karlin and Lakhovich *Tsaddikim*.

After the release of the 'Karliner' leaders, the Russian government decreed (December 15th, 1798) that 'the Karlin sect is not dangerous and may continue to exist as previously.'¹⁰⁷ Encouraged, naturally enough, by this victory, the hasidim proceeded to accuse the

heads of the Vilna *kahal* of embezzling public funds.¹⁰⁸ As a result, the heads of the *kahal* were imprisoned in Vilna, the boxes containing the *kahal* documents were sealed, and a date was set for new elections (February, 1799). Under pressure from the Russian authorities, eight hasidim were elected to the new, seventeen-member *kahal*. The hasidim thus achieved equal rights in Vilna, the mithnaged stronghold.

At the same time as in Vilna and Minsk the struggle against the hasidim was being conducted by the *kahal*, in Pinsk R. Avigdor, as we learn from the wording of his request quoted above, was left to fight a lone battle against them. The beginning of this struggle in Pinsk and its environs is described by R. Avigdor in his letter of appeal. He was no doubt helped in carrying on the struggle by the actions of the Vilna and Minsk communities, especially as Pinsk was spiritually close to Vilna and administratively linked to the main provincial community of Minsk. The proclamation of the Vilna *Gaon* (1796) must also have reached Pinsk, as must the *Gaon's* two special envoys, R. Hayyim and R. Saadyah; and the third *herem* was also proclaimed there. In the *pinkas* of the Minsk community for the year 1798, we find a ban on ritual slaughtering after the manner of the hasidim (with 'sharpened slaughtering knives'). Every animal and bird slaughtered in the hasidic manner was decreed to be *terefah*, and anyone that transgressed this ban was declared to be in *herem*. Similar decrees are found in the *pinkasim* of other towns in Lithuania and White Russia.¹⁰⁹ It may be presumed

¹⁰⁶ A. Friedkin, *A. B. Gottlober un Sayn Epokhe*, p. 75. See also: *Yizkor-Bukh fun Rakishok un Umgegend*, p. 59, Johannesburg 1952; Y. Lifschits, *Zikhron Yaakov*, Pt. I, p. 15, Kovno-Slobodka 1924.

In the course of time the reason for the festival was forgotten. Thus, for example, in the year 1932 the last Rebbe of Karlin, R. Elimelekh, in my presence asked his aged caretaker, who knew every detail of the customs followed by the Karlin *Tsaddikim*, to explain the rejoicing of 'the fifth light,' and though the caretaker had witnessed this celebration for the past seventy years, he was unable to give an answer. Moreover, the *Tsaddik* R. Yohanan of Karlin denied the historicity of the connection, though he had heard about it: Hausman, *Divrei Aharon*, p. 207.

¹⁰⁷ Dubnow, *Yevreyskaya Starina*, Vol. III, p. 273, document 21.

¹⁰⁸ Hessen, *Istoriya Yevreyskogo Naroda v Rossiye*, Vol. I, p. 109; cf. M. Teitelbaum, *Ha-Rav mi-Ladi*, p. 87. The struggle in the Vilna community has been critically investigated by Yisrael Klausner, *Vilna bi-Tekufath ha-Gaon*, pp. 20-45, Jerusalem 1942. In May, 1798, the hasidim in the small town of Vidz, to the north of Vilna, led by their *shohet* [ritual slaughterer], submitted to the authorities a written denunciation against the Vilna *kahal* (Klausner, *op. cit.*, p. 31). This incident shows that in north-western Lithuania there were small towns in which hasidism had established itself. The denunciation greatly enraged R. Shneur-Zalman. In one of his letters he writes: 'The Vidz denunciation literally made me shudder' (Hilman, *Iggeroth Baal ha-Tanya*, p. 207), because its authors were almost certainly *Habad* hasidim.

¹⁰⁹ Y. Brafman, *Kniga Kahala*, quoted by Dubnow in the monthly *Voskhod*, 1892, No. 11, p. 7.

A note that I found in the *pinkas* of the Pinsk *Hevrah Kaddisha* [burial society] states that the society's

that Pinsk, too, was similarly torn by sectarian strife in those years.

In the Stolin *genizah* there is a letter from R. Asher of Stolin to a certain R. Yosef of Pinsk which contains an echo of the tense situation prevailing in Pinsk in those years and testifies to R. Avigdor's sectarian fervour against the hasidim. R. Asher writes as follows:

'My dear friend, R. Yosef,

I was enraged to hear that this man had told his followers to bring him a hasid's head. Although this is nothing new to me, still, if I am unable to make peace as we agreed, do you all form a single group and let all the doers of iniquity be dispersed. I warn you to let nothing be changed and not to let him carry out his evil design. Strengthen the weak-kneed and feeble-handed, and may the Lord uphold you with the strength of faith. Truth is strong and everlasting; therefore be not concerned or afraid or cast down, and the Lord will make peace as seems good to Him, for we have fought this battle only for the Lord's sake.

From your affectionate friend who prays
for your welfare,
Asher of Stolin.

Greetings to you all in the name of the Almighty.'

R. Asher does not explicitly name 'this man (who) had told his followers to bring him a hasid's head.' This is in keeping with his regular practice, in his letters dealing with controversial matters, of not mentioning names. In this letter here, the Karlin hasidim in Pinsk are advised to dissociate themselves from the rest of the community and to establish their own entity: 'If I am unable to make peace as we agreed, do you all form a single group'—an instruction that was actually carried out, as is evident from R. Avigdor's letter of appeal (the election of Hershel Kolodner, etc.). Although R. Asher's letter bears no date, it was obviously written in the last decade of the eighteenth century.¹¹⁰

previous *pinkas* was burnt in the great fire of 1799. Apparently the town *pinkas* was also burnt at the same time, and thus was lost material of the first importance for our knowledge of the sectarian struggle of those days. See: S. M. Rabinowitsch, '*Al Pinsk, Karlin ve-Yoshveihen*,' *op. cit.*, p. 13.

¹¹⁰ At the time, the bitterness of the dispute led to the use of physical violence by both sides. R. Yisrael-Leibel writes in his *Sefer ha-Vikkuah*. As they did... to the great *Rav* of the holy community of Volpe—they

The subsequent developments in R. Avigdor's fight against the hasidim, in Pinsk and its environs, are described in his detailed letter of appeal which deserves to be treated as a court confession. The Karlin hasidim, like their brethren in Vilna, found a way to the Russian authorities, in this case to the provincial governor in Minsk, and were able to influence him by their representations. In the report of the Pinsk municipal leaders, we read that R. Avigdor was unduly fond of the bottle. That the hasidim were responsible for this statement is clear from the fact that R. Avigdor's intemperance is also mentioned by R. Shneur-Zalman in the reply sent by him to the Tsar Alexander I (May, 1801). We further find references to this weakness of R. Avigdor's in the hasidic writings.¹¹¹ However, even when the influence of the Vilna community was greatly weakened after the first release from prison of R. Shneur-Zalman (1798), R. Avigdor still refused to give up the struggle. Seeing that both the local authorities in Pinsk and the provincial governor at Minsk took the side of the hasidim, he appealed over their heads to the highest government institutions in St. Petersburg.

In 1800, after consultation with the Vilna *kahal*,¹¹² he travelled to St. Petersburg and presented his petition in person. After a long, drawn-out correspondence between the public prosecutor in St. Petersburg and the provincial authorities in Vilna and Minsk, the government decided that the 'Karliner sect' did not constitute a political danger. With regard to R. Avigdor's demand for the repayment of the debt owing him, the public prosecutor decided, in the Tsar's name, to instruct the provincial governors to investigate the matter. The Minsk governor handed the investigation over to the local authorities. What eventually happened to the financial demands made by R. Avigdor we do not know. All that is certain is that, in his second

stripped off his clothes and forced him to enter the town stark naked.' (Dubnow, *Toledoth ha-Hasiduth*, p. 258.) It should be noted that in Karlin there was a synagogue called 'The Volpe synagogue.' 'The *Rav* of Volpe' is also mentioned by S. M. Rabinowitsch (*op. cit.*, p. 15). Moreover, people in Karlin used to relate that the hasidim there hounded the '*Rav* from Volpe.' It may be that Karlin was also the scene of the attacks on the *Rav* of Volpe mentioned by R. Yisrael-Leibel in his *Sefer ha-Vikkuah*.

¹¹¹ Dubnow, *Yevreyskaya Starina*, Vol. III, p. 278; *Shivhei ha-Rav R. Shneur-Zalman*, published by Druker, p. 13, Lemberg (no year of publication).

¹¹² Hessen, *Yevreyi v Rossiya*, p. 170 ff.

petition which he presented in April, 1801, after R. Shneur-Zalman's second release from prison, he writes that he has still not received the money.¹¹³

While R. Avigdor was running from government office to government office in St. Petersburg, mainly in connection with his financial demands, R. Shneur-Zalman was suddenly brought to the same city and imprisoned there. His imprisonment was this time connected with the report on the state of Russian Jewry submitted at that time to the government by the poet and statesman, Dyerzhavin.¹¹⁴ The order for the imprisonment of R. Shneur-Zalman was received by the provincial governor of White Russia, after Dyerzhavin had visited the governor in connection with an investigation of the causes of the famine in the province. Before this, there had been an exchange of letters about the hasidim between the provincial governors in Lithuania and Minsk. During his visit to White Russia, Dyerzhavin had made the acquaintance of R. Shneur-Zalman. Four days after Dyerzhavin submitted his report, R. Shneur-Zalman was thrown into prison. In St. Petersburg, R. Avigdor helped the judges by drawing up in writing questions and charges to be used in the investigation of R. Shneur-Zalman, to which the latter replied also in writing. The whole matter was then handed over by the 'Secret Office' to the third department of the Senate. A fortnight later, R. Shneur-Zalman was released from prison, but ordered to remain in St. Petersburg.

Both parties to the dispute submitted petitions and declarations which contained details about the first imprisonment of R. Shneur-Zalman in 1798. R. Avigdor, in his petitions, demands that all the other 'Karlner' leaders should also be arrested and brought to St. Petersburg,¹¹⁵ a demand which was not granted. The documents show that the hasidim of Lakhovich, whose influence had meanwhile spread to the 'principal community' of Lithuania, Slutsk, were being violently harried by the mithnagdim, and also that the hasidim as a whole enjoyed the support of the provincial authorities in Minsk. It is characteristic that R. Avigdor quotes the evidence of Jews from Vilna and Slutsk in support of his written charges, but not the evidence of his own fellow-townsmen

from Pinsk. As a result of the arguments and other weapons employed by R. Avigdor in this final stage, his struggle against the hasidim lost its originally selfless religious character and degenerated into a private war for the satisfaction of personal demands (such as repayment of debts), carried on by means of denunciations to the Russian authorities, even though R. Avigdor still endeavoured to base his charges on the tenets of Judaism. Before the Senate had had time to study the documents in the dispute, a palace revolution took place in St. Petersburg (the assassination of the Tsar Paul by his ministers, March 1801). R. Shneur-Zalman was immediately released and permitted to return home; and thus ended the struggle between him and R. Avigdor.

Amongst all the bitter enemies of hasidism, R. Avigdor occupies a special place in the hasidic writings and stories. He is referred to simply as 'Avigdor,' with the addition of such appellations as 'the wicked one,' 'the informer,' 'may his name and memory be blotted out,' and the like; and it is related of him that he was reduced to abject poverty and finally came to beg alms of R. Shneur-Zalman, and also that his sons became hasidim. This tradition about the conversion of R. Avigdor's sons to hasidism is confirmed by one of his descendants, who writes as follows: 'The Israelit family . . . were . . . on the father's side, descended from R. Avigdor of Pinsk, the well-known adversary of R. Shneur-Zalman of Ladi . . . From the first beginnings of *Habad* hasidism this family was a stronghold of mithnagdism. However, my grandfather, the grandson of R. Avigdor of Pinsk whose name he actually bore, made a breach, as it were, in this fortress, for he became a fervent hasid. In this he was followed by my father . . . whose house was steeped in *Torah* and hasidism.'¹¹⁶ What happened to R. Avigdor in the last years of his life is not known. His son was a *dayyan* in Pinsk.¹¹⁷

¹¹⁶ Heilman, *Beth Rabbi*, Pt. I, p. 34, n. 2 and p. 68; Teitelbaum, *Ha-Rav mi-Ladi*, p. 23, n. 3; *Shivhei ha-Rav*, pp. 3, 12 et al.; N. Israelit, *Mishpahath Israelit*, *Pinkas Kletsk*, p. 51, Tel Aviv 1959.

¹¹⁷ *Entsiklopediyah Yisraelith*, Vol. I, s.v.: *Avigdor ben Yosef-Hayyim*, Berlin 1929. From a letter written by one of the hasidim to the son of R. Shneur-Zalman in 1806, in which the writer violently abuses R. Avigdor, we may conclude that R. Avigdor was still alive in that year. The source of this letter—H. A. Bikhovski, *Ginzei Nistaroth, Or Rav*, p. 7, Jerusalem 1924—is known not to be entirely reliable.

The writer Zalman Shneur has included an imaginat-

¹¹³ Dubnow, *Yevreyskaya Starina*, Vol. III, pp. 253-261; and Documents 9, 10, 11-13, 24.

¹¹⁴ Hessen, *Yevreyi v Rossiya*, pp. 176-180.

¹¹⁵ Dubnow, *Yevreyskaya Starina*, Vol. III, p. 271, Document 20.

In all the documents, both the official government memoranda and the petitions of R. Avigdor, the hasidim are referred to as 'Karliners'; and the same name is used by the hasidim themselves in their letters. R. Avigdor, in one of his letters, explains the appellation as follows: 'Those who flock after him [sc. R. Shneur-Zalman] are called Karliners because, after the death of the two writers mentioned above [the Besht and the *Maggid* of Mezerich], Aharon and Shelomo [i.e., R. Aharon the Great and R. Shelomo of Karlin] of the community of Karlin in the province of Minsk were the first to follow in their footsteps.'¹¹⁸ R. Shneur-Zalman, on the other hand, uses the term 'hasidim' and remarks 'that he [sc. R. Avigdor] calls them Karliners only out of hatred.'¹¹⁹ The representative of the Vilna community writes: 'because of their wildness the hasidim are called Karliners.'¹²⁰ All these statements show that the appellation 'Karliners' was an insulting term of abuse, and it was used in this sense down to the fifties of the nineteenth century.¹²¹

During the years 1794-1801 the numbers of the hasidim increased, thanks to the legal status that they enjoyed both in Pinsk itself and also in Polesia. Perhaps their numbers were now swelled by all those who had previously been afraid to proclaim their adherence to the movement openly. Small groups of Karlin hasidim now came into existence not only in central Polesia, but also in other towns of Lithuania. Thus, for example, in Vilna there was a Karlin prayer-house ['shtiebel,' 'shulkhen'], and even a Lakhovich 'shtiebel.' The Lakhovich hasidim, who appear to have been numerous, maintained contact with their Rebbe, R. Mordekhai, through his son-in-law, R. Yitshak the son of R. Wolf, who used to visit them regularly and give them moral support in their struggle to maintain their position.

In the conflict between the mithnagdim and the hasidim, the mass of ordinary Jews came down firmly on the side of the hasidim, and the Tsarist régime gave

legal confirmation to the popular verdict: 'If in any town the dispute becomes so bitter that one group refuses to pray with the other in the same synagogue, then either has the right to build a synagogue of its own and to elect its own rabbis. But both groups shall form one community.' ['Polozheniye' 1804].¹²²

E. *Rabbi Asher the First* (1793-1826)

After their victory in the last decade of the eighteenth century the Karlin hasidim were able to follow their own customs, openly and without fear of moles-

¹²² P. S. Marek, 'Vnutrennyaya Borba v Yevreystve v XVIII Veke,' *Yevreyskaya Starina*, Vol. XII, p. 163, Leningrad 1928. On the existence of a Karlin and Lakhovitch *minyán* at that time in Vilna, see Dubnow, *Toledoth ha-Hasiduth*, p. 223; Klausner, *op. cit.*, p. 24 ff. On the hasidim in Vidz see above, n. 108. Even after the Russian government in St. Petersburg had released R. Shneur-Zalman from prison, the mithnagdim in Vilna still continued their fight against the hasidim and went on applying the name 'Karliner' to any and every hasid. Thus, in the regulation of 'the *beth midrash* of the pious *Gaon*, *Rabbenu Eliyahu*,' of the 24th *Adar*, 1801, we find it explicitly stated that 'great care shall be taken to ensure that, among the above-mentioned students in the *beth midrash*, there shall not be a single one of the new sect of the so-called Karliners' (quoted by S. Y. Fuen, *Kiryah Neemanah*, p. 275, Vilna 1860). The same attitude to the hasidim as prevailed in 'the *beth midrash* of the *Gaon*' in Vilna was also found at this time in the talmudic study groups in the small towns, which were controlled by the mithnagdim. In the *pinkas* of 'the holy circle for the study of *Talmud* and *Mishnah*' in the small town of Radoshkovich (close to Minsk), the original manuscript of which is in the National Library in Jerusalem (4° 636), there is a resolution of the 26th *Tishri*, 1800, prohibiting the admission of hasidim to this group. (I. Halpern, 'Havuroth la-Torah ve-la-Mitsvoth ve-ha-Tenuah ha-Hasidith be-Hithpashtuthah,' *Zion*, 22nd year, pp. 194-213, Jerusalem 1957). Instructively characteristic is the gradual change for the better reflected by the *pinkas* of this group in the attitude to the hasidim in the first years of the nineteenth century. Up to 1804 we still find the resolution of 1800 in full force. But already in 1805 the resolution is no longer quoted in full, but is simply included in 'the minutes made in the above *pinkas* of decisions taken up to this day.' The same formula appears in the regulations for 1806 and 1807. However, in 1808 this resolution was completely annulled, since 'at this time the majority of the community is unable to conform to this resolution and it may lead to unseemly conduct and violent quarrels.' The majority of the community evidently by now contained so many hasidim that it was no longer possible to keep them out of the study circle.

ive literary reconstruction of the personalities of the Vilna *Gaon* and R. Shneur-Zalman, and of R. Avigdor's denunciation, in his story *Ha-Gaon ve-ha-Rav*, Tel Aviv 1958.

¹¹⁸ Dubnow, *Yevreyskaya Starina*, Vol. III, p. 266, Document 15.

¹¹⁹ Dubnow, *op. cit.*, p. 273, Document 21.

¹²⁰ Hessen, *Istoriya Yevreyskogo Naroda v Rossiye*, Pt. I, p. 111, n. 19.

¹²¹ Friedkin, *Gottlober un Sayn Epokhe*, p. 75. V. *supr.*

tation. But the bitter animosity between them and the mithnaged majority all around them was not completely extinguished, and from time to time it flared up again into communal and personal strife.

Throughout the nineteenth century Karlin hasidism preserved its character virtually unchanged. The new elements introduced by hasidism into the beliefs and worships of Judaism crystallised, in time, into a fixed pattern of dogma. The leader of the hasidim, in whom they had unbounded faith, was the *Tsaddik* or Rebbe. His opinion and authority were absolutely binding on all members of the sect. These *Tsaddikim* established family dynasties, with the father's power and sanctity passing to the son. The *Tsaddik* knew every single one of his followers personally and was acquainted with their private affairs and worries; he was always ready with an encouraging word; he supported them in their griefs and shared in their joys, and at all times he was their guide in piety and worship. The *Tsaddik's* paternal attitude to his hasidim, together with the individual hasid's faith in the sanctity and power of his *Tsaddik*, had a marked effect on the hasid's whole spiritual character, setting him apart from the Lithuanian rabbinical environment in which he lived. The focal point of the Karlin hasid's—as of any other hasid's—life was his Rebbe, because 'the Rebbe, too, is thinking of him all the time.' This intimate relationship with the Rebbe had a similar effect on the relations of the hasidim with each other. The Karlin hasid was like all the other hasidim in that he lived his life within the closed circle of his hasidic environment. But, as a result of the special development and stress that it gave to certain basic hasidic tenets, Karlin hasidism took on a form that distinguished it from the rest of the hasidic movement.

During the first quarter of the nineteenth century the Karlin hasidim were led by R. Asher of Stolin, the son of R. Aharon the Great who has already been mentioned. Under R. Asher's leadership, the number of the Karlin hasidim seems to have increased, especially in Polesia and Volhynia, thanks to the favourable geographical position occupied by Stolin on the borders of the province of Volhynia. R. Asher's father, R. Aharon the Great, had gone to the people; now the people came to R. Asher, but not always in order to get from R. Asher what R. Aharon the Great had wanted to give them.

Hasidic tradition relates that, during the emergency of the Napoleonic wars, the Karlin hasidim found

a safe place of refuge in R. Asher's house. Among the 'holy writings' discovered in the Stolin *genizah* were two of R. Asher's *pinkasim* [private notes]. In one of these, comprising mainly records of family matters, there is a will drawn up by R. Asher from which it is clear that he possessed considerable wealth in money and landed property. Yet—and this should be stressed—the dynasty of Karlin *Tsaddikim* were not ambitious for material wealth, nor did they aspire to give their 'court' the external magnificence which was so sought after by some of the *Tsaddikim* in Volhynia and the Ukraine. On the contrary, it was the custom of the Karlin *Tsaddikim* to take money from their wealthy hasidim and distribute it amongst their poorer followers.

R. Asher was in the habit, on Sabbaths and Festivals, of expounding a hasidic interpretation of the weekly portion of the Law. A collection of these hasidic sermons, together with 'Rules of Right Conduct,' 'Exhortations,' and several of R. Asher's letters, was published by the Karlin hasidim, and are included in the volume *Beth Aharon*.¹²³ In the preface to this work, the publishers write as follows: '... Excellent sermons... delivered... by our Teacher and Master, R. Aharon himself [sc. R. Aharon the Second, the son of R. Asher the First]... accurately and truly recorded... We have added a separate section for the holy writings... of our Teacher R. Asher [the First]... and several articles are as written in his holy hand. Also some holy letters, and the daily programme of our holy Rebbes... who delivered it from their holy hand to the community of Yeshurun [i.e., the

¹²³ *Tsavvaah mi-Kethoveth Yad Morenu... R. Aharon [ha-Gadol] mi-Karlin... ve-Hanhagoth Yesharoth... mi-Beno R. Asher*, Chernovits 1849, 1855; *Beth Aharon... R. Aharon... mi-Karlin u-Miltha... Morenu Asher u-mi-Pi... R. Aharon ha-Gadol... mi-Karlin. Gam... meeth Beno... R. Asher... mi-Stolin*, Brody 1875. Here the *Hanhagoth Yesharoth* [Guides to Good Conduct] (pp. 2, 3) of R. Asher the First are printed with slight textual alterations, as also his *Azharoth* [Exhortations] (pp. 3–5), *Derashoth* [Sermons] (pp. 17–41), Letters (pp. 293, 297, 315) and *Dibburim Nehmadim* [Delightful Sayings] reported in his name (pp. 285–287). Since *Beth Aharon* also contains the Sermons and Letters of R. Aharon the Second, the book actually comprises the whole spiritual legacy of the Karlin dynasty. A. Hausman, in his books *Divrei Aharon*, pp. 5–20 (Jerusalem 1962) and *Birkath Aharon*, pp. 17–50 (Jerusalem 1970), cites 'Sayings' which the Karlin hasidim attribute to R. Asher the First and used to relate in his name. Cf., n. 161.

Jews] that thronged the Rebbes' threshold . . . And the holy writings of our Master and Teacher [R. Aharon the Second] . . . and of his father [R. Asher the First] . . . which were collected together . . . and annotated in the holy hand of our revered Teacher and Master [R. Aharon the Second] of blessed memory, various annotations on various themes . . . We have thought fit to add other excellent matters, written down by the followers of our Teacher and Master [R. Aharon the Second] as a record of his holy words which they heard from his holy mouth at various times, when they were in the sanctity of his house. Although some of these matters are similar to the sermons already mentioned which were written by our Teacher and Master . . . we have nevertheless, out of reverence for his sanctity, printed every one of them without any alterations . . .' From these prefatory remarks, and also from the introductions added by the hasidim themselves to every article and from their occasional comments inserted in the text, it may be inferred that the hasidim took pains to give the name of the author of every manuscript, although we cannot be sure that they always succeeded. The writings of R. Asher the First—as stated by the hasidim themselves in the 'Preface'—were edited by his son R. Aharon.

About the character and opinions of R. Asher we can learn from the 'Rules of Right Conduct' (*Hanhagoth Yesharoth*) which he gave to his followers and which were printed together with the will of his father, R. Aharon the Great, during the lifetime of his son and successor, R. Aharon the Second (Chernovits 1849 and 1855). R. Asher charges his hasidim as follows: 'Every one of you must sanctify himself, that the Lord may dwell within him, as it is written: "And you shall make me a shrine that I may dwell there," etc. (Exodus xxv, 8) . . . And every one of you shall divide his days and years between the study of the Bible, the *Mishnah*, and the *Gemara* and *Aggadah*, this being the bounden duty of every Jew . . . Every one must devote himself to the study of the *Gemara* and *Posekim* and must learn according to his need; he must not let himself be unoccupied, for in moments of idleness it is better that he should take up the holy Prophets and learn morality and piety from them . . . Let every one that has the mind and intention to learn and understand the *Gemara* and the *Posekim* be very careful. Let him not be like those that learn—Heaven forbid!—only for their own greater glory, but let him, with his keen mind, fully comprehend all that he

learns. Let him not go on from one matter to another until he has fully understood the first, and let him go over it again three or four times until he knows it by heart . . . A little studying done with his whole heart will be of benefit to him alike in sharpening his wits, improving his memory, and increasing his piety . . .' 'Let him take care to have a good, faithful and trustworthy friend to whom he can tell all his innermost thoughts for at least half an hour every day . . .' 'Let every one take care to give a tithe of what he earns, and let him not think this a trivial matter, as expounded in the *Gemara* and *Midrash* and *Posekim* . . .'

The other writings attributed to R. Asher the First—'several articles in his own holy hand'—which were printed at a later date (*Beth Aharon*, Brody 1875) also give us an insight into his conception of hasidism. In one of these, which the hasidim attest to have been 'copied from the original manuscript of the same holy Rabbi [R. Asher the First],' we read the following instructions to the hasidim: 'When any one of you has to speak about the affairs of this world, let his thought be that he is going down from a higher sphere, like a man that is going out from his house and intends to return. Just as such a man, while walking, is thinking when he will return to his house, so let the hasid always think of the higher world, where is his real home, of the Creator Blessed Be He, even when he is talking of the affairs of this world. Let his thoughts return at once to cleave first of all to the Creator Blessed Be He.' 'Let not a man be too strict in examining everything that he does, for this is the intention of the evil impulse [*ha-yetser hara*]*—*to make him fear that he is not doing this thing as he should, in order to plunge him into melancholy. And melancholy, as we know, is a great hindrance to the proper worship of the Creator. Even if a man has transgressed let him not be so overcome by melancholy as to stop his work. Let him simply regret the transgression, and then once more rejoice in the Creator. Since he is genuinely contrite . . . he should not be melancholy, but should consider that the Creator, who searches the heart and reins, knows that his wish is to do only what is best.' For 'the Holy One Blessed Be He does not upbraid His creatures . . . for everything is judged according to human nature, according to the place and the time, and according to the measure [of each man's] faith and piety and intelligence . . . and purity of heart and strength of mind are enough

for you to be able to carry out the commandment: "Know Him in all your ways." How can you "know Him"? In joy . . . and then you will attain true wisdom . . . Let everyone worship the Creator joyfully at all times and rejoice in his lot, the lot given him by God on High.' With regard to the *mithnagdim*, R. Asher lays down the following 'great principle: When people abuse the *hasid* for his form of prayer or for other matters, he shall not answer them even in a conciliatory tone, so as not to start a quarrel and give rise to pride, for pride makes man forget the Creator Blessed Be He. And our Sages have said: "Silence makes a man humble."'

Very typical and instructive—both for R. Asher's estimate of the importance and purpose of the study of the Law and also for his fatherly attitude to his followers—is the letter that he wrote to one of his close associates, which is also included in the volume *Beth Aharon*. In one part of this letter, R. Asher writes:

' . . . Your son-in-law (long may he live!) told me that your honour is neglecting your trade . . . and not doing any business, but wishes just to sit at home . . . You must know, my dear friend, that this is not the right way. It is plainly written in the *Torah*: "Thou shalt eat the fruit of thy labours," etc. And in the *Gemara*: "He that enjoys the fruit of his labours is greater than the God-fearing man." Believe me, my dear friend, that one loan or one small coin given as charity, or any of the other practical observances, especially entertaining guests . . . is better than several weeks, perhaps even years, of studying the *Torah*. For the end of study is action . . . as you can learn from the questions asked: Did you do business honestly and did you study the *Torah* regularly? Which shows that whoever does business honestly is not obliged only to study the *Torah* regularly . . . and the way is thus open to businessmen who wish to turn aside from evil and do good: as I wrote, more than by several weeks of study. With God's help it has been granted me to persuade several people, who wished to do as you do, to carry on with their business; and they, thank God, are grateful to me, both in this world and the next. The main thing is that you should not be negligent in any matter of business. For you must know that, when you neglect your business, your study suffers, too. Of this, too, it is written: "Thou shalt not eat the bread of idleness . . ." God willing, when you follow my advice, I shall write to

you at greater length. Your task is to act, and the Lord will bring the work to a good end . . . I have told my brother-in-law (long may he live!) to look after you and watch over your health; to see to it that you eat properly and sleep properly, and that you get the sleep you require for the health of your body, head and limbs. Please do not treat this matter lightly, especially as you are by nature thin and delicate. Your study of the *Torah* will, God willing, be improved by your care.'

Some time later R. Asher moved to Karlin, the place to which, fifty years before, his father had with such enthusiasm and devotion brought the doctrine of hasidism from Mezerich. The exact year of R. Asher's return to Karlin is not known, but it could not have been before 1810, since in that year he was still living in Stolin, where he was visited by R. Mordekhai of Lakhovich, who also died there.¹²⁴ Thus Karlin once more became the centre of the Karlin hasidim.

R. Asher's importance in the hasidic world and his relations with other contemporary *Tsaddikim* are indicated by two documents found in the Stolin *genizah*: a letter from R. Asher to the famed *Tsaddik* of the Polish hasidim, R. Yisrael of Kozhenits ('the *Maggid* of Kozhenits'; both the original and a copy of this letter were found); and a public proclamation written by R. Asher in support of Jews living in Palestine. Although neither of the documents is dated, it is clear that they were both written at the beginning of the nineteenth century.¹²⁵ Below are excerpts from the letter sent by R. Asher the First of Stolin to R. Yisrael of Kozhenits:

'With the help of the Holy Name, on the second day of the week . . . here in the community of Stolin.

'Greetings, greetings . . . to his reverence . . . the Rabbi . . . the man of God . . . the renowned *hasid* . . . Yisrael (long may he live!) together with . . . his wife and children (long may they live!) and all his followers . . . to all of them greetings and peace upon Israel.

¹²⁴ Kleinman, *Mazkereth Shem ha-Gedolim*, p. 108. The grave of R. Mordekhai of Lakhovich is in Stolin: *Divrei Shalom* by R. Shalom of Koidanov, p. 14, Vilna 1882.

¹²⁵ Parts of the two documents are quoted in the original in Dubnow, *Toledoth ha-Hasiduth*, pp. 481–483. *Beth Aharon* (p. 297) contains a small excerpt from the letter to R. Yisrael of Kozhenits, and also the Proclamation (p. 315), printed with slight textual alterations and mistakenly attributed to R. Aharon the Second.

'Praise be to God, we are alive and well, I and my pious wife... Feige-Bathyah, and my little son, Aharon, and my daughter, Perl, and her husband and his children, and my wife's son... Moshe-Baer... and his wife and children... The Lord be praised... we are all... here alive and well, and may we be granted the blessing of prosperity... life and peace... that it may be vouchsafed me to behold his holy reverence's countenance... in life, joy, and peace.

'My dearly beloved friend... whom I remember at all times... and whom I entreat... to have me engraved on his pure and holy heart... and to accept my offering [i.e., gift] which I gladly send to him, that it may please him to recall me, my son, and my wife. Even though I am far away... from his reverence, yet is my soul bound to his soul... In almost every prayer, and especially on our holy Sabbaths... I am bound to him... with bonds of love... and in particular... his holy words... delivered to me by R. Barukh of Zhelikhov who requested me in his holy name... to remain silent and calm and not to intervene in the dispute...

'... God will remember that, when I was in the community of Zhelikhov, I had several adventures and with the Lord's help I found the middle path. To be sure, here, too, [in Stolin], there were several such incidents... but this is not my way... Heaven protect me from matters of this kind and their like [i.e., quarrels], and I shall not go back on what I have said. It may have happened once in a year that I was obliged to speak in public... for when... a man truly and sincerely desires to receive moral guidance, it is my duty to prevent him from committing a transgression, as my heart and soul prompt me. But apart from this... I shall not speak... for several private reasons.

'... My very dear friend... be sure... that my faith is no mere formal observance (Heaven forbid!)... My heart cries to the Lord... I have learnt from the holy ones of the Most High, and especially from his reverence's holy lips, how to keep our faith... Only he... who is in the habit of exaggerating... can say, "Accept my opinion and my manner of worship; this is the way in which they shall all walk."... But we have received all the ways of the Lord, loving kindness and truth, from our sovereign David, King of Israel... In short, the wise man in this time will be silent, etc.

'... I know that the holy Rabbi (blessed be he and

blessed be his name!...) weeps out his soul in secret... and his heart cries to the Lord for this... Neither do I say, Accept my opinion; but only... that Israel's faith in *Torah*, prayer, and *mitsvoth* should be strengthened, as when he stood at the foot of Mount Sinai and said "We shall do and obey."

'... Who is the man that presumes to intervene in the dispute and to delay (Heaven forbid!) the reconciliation? Let my lord believe me that, at the time when I wrote, I could not control myself, so great was my grief... My lord has the wisdom and knowledge... to understand... the root of the matter. Therefore let him do what seems right to him. I trust in his graciousness and goodness to find me innocent and thereby behold the goodness of my heart... Thus far have I poured out my heart...

'In short, were I to describe to his reverence in detail several matters... that I saw with my own eyes and heard with my own ears, and that I can testify to... my lord would be astounded by the report and would certainly, as I think, publicly demand that they abandon this way. I need not mention them by name... There are thousands upon thousands of them, almost a whole State, that speak in the streets only about the mystic secrets of the Law... They have cast truth and faith to the ground and falsely slander the holy ones of the Most High [i.e., the *Tsaddikim*]... saying: "Everything with them is as naught... they spurn the observance of the *mitsvoth* and despise the plain meaning of the *Torah*."... If I were able... to describe... how the *shiddukh* [marriage agreement] was made with the holy Rabbi and *Gaon*... that they might have a specious cause for an otherwise unjustifiable quarrel... They achieved what they desired, but they did not act truthfully...

'May the Lord preserve us from evil and strange thoughts! Far be it from me and from my father's house to intervene in the dispute. I have never presumed... to say that I, too, am one of the great ones of our time. I do not stand in the presence of the great; nay, I pray the Lord... at all times and every hour that I may know my place, and that it may be granted me to be the youngest... and humblest of the disciples, and to be truly close... to the holy ones of our time... I trust in my Lord's graciousness and goodness... and in the honesty of my intentions in this, and that all will end well.

'From me who write to his reverence... about my heart's friendship... and whose soul... longs to be...

in his courts and to behold the delight... of his glorious holiness, in life and peace. May he remember me for good... at all times and at every hour...

His friend for ever...'

The letter is full of allusions, names being hardly mentioned at all: 'I need not mention them by name.' But it is clear that the main point concerns 'the great controversy.' The key to understanding some of the events hinted at in the letter can be provided by certain details from the contemporary history of hasidism and also from R. Asher's own private life. When R. Asher writes sorrowfully about what he endured in Zhelikhov, he is no doubt referring to the dispute between himself and R. Levi-Yitshak of Berdichev.¹²⁶

'The holy Rabbi, blessed be he and blessed be his name,' mentioned in the letter is presumably the *Tsaddik* R. Barukh of Mezhibozh, whose pupil R. Asher had been for a short time.¹²⁷ R. Asher complains of 'thousands upon thousands... almost a whole State, that speak in the streets only about the mystic secrets of the Law... They have cast truth and faith to the ground, and falsely slander the holy ones of the Most High,' the reference here, apparently, being to the *Habad* hasidim of R. Shneur-Zalman. It is well known that at this time a violent dispute had broken out between the *Tsaddikim*. R. Avraham of Kalisk (then in Palestine), R. Barukh of Mezhibozh, R. Mordekhai of Lakhovich and R. Asher of Stolin all strongly opposed R. Shneur-Zalman of Ladi, who was supported by R. Levi-Yitshak of Berdichev.¹²⁸ The cause of the

dispute was, as can be inferred from the letters written by R. Asher¹²⁹ and by R. Avraham of Kalisk,¹³⁰ not only doctrinal, but also partly personal, especially in the case of R. Barukh of Mezhibozh, on account of R. Shneur-Zalman's great influence. R. Asher, in this letter, after remarking on the spiritual difference between Karlin and *Habad* hasidism, promises not to take any part in the dispute and appeals for moral support to his teacher, R. Yisrael of Kozhenits. The letter is written throughout in a humble and submissive tone, indicating that the writer felt that he was under attack. It is evident from this letter that R. Asher at this period had as yet nothing of the inner confidence and proud status of his father, R. Aharon the Great.¹³¹ The letter was most probably written at some time between 1802, the year of the birth of 'the little son of Aharon,' and 1807, the year of the death of Perl's husband, R. Aharon, who is mentioned in the letter with the addition of the words 'may he live!'

The text of R. Asher the First's public appeal on behalf of the Holy Land runs as follows:

'... Be silent and hear, O Israel!... Blessed be the Lord that has sanctified us with the sanctity of the Land of Israel... For this, sages and prophets have instructed us to set aside a place for our prayer thrice daily for our Land and... our holy Temple... Verily, His mercies have not failed us till now... Throughout our borders... those that perform His word in the Holy Land... are strengthened by great benefactions and fulfil their holy charge... interceding for us and our brethren that dwell outside it. Now I have seen that there is none among you who will rouse you from your deep slumber, that you may defend ourselves... and find a place in the Lord's inheritance... Hence I have resolved... to make known to you my request and entreaty: My dearly beloved Jewish brethren, awaken your hearts to feel pity and compassion for the poor of our Land, the Land of Life, man and woman, child and suckling. Strengthen and support, I pray you... the cities of our God... and strengthen your hearts, all you that wait for the Lord... Then they will rejoice in us and

¹²⁶ V. supr. R. Barukh of Zhelikhov, who is mentioned in this letter, is elsewhere described as a disciple of R. Asher; Hausman, *Divrei Aharon*, p. 17; on pp. 6 and 17, R. Shalom of Horodok is named as a disciple of R. Asher. V. also Hausman, *Birkhath Aharon*, p. 54.

¹²⁷ V. supr.

¹²⁸ Heilman, *Beth Rabbi*, Pt. I, p. 83 ff. Compare this letter of R. Asher's with the letter from R. Avraham of Kalisk to R. Shneur-Zalman. A. Y. Braver, 'Al ha-Mahloketh bein R. Shneur-Zalman mi-Ladi ve-R. Avraham Hacohen mi-Kalisk,' *Kiryath Sefer*, Vol. I, p. 144 ff., Jerusalem 1924. The bitterness between the Lithuania *Tsaddikim* and R. Shneur-Zalman goes back to the time of R. Shelomo of Karlin. It continued right down to the first quarter of the nineteenth century, as can be seen from the fact that, in his Proclamation On Behalf of *Erets Yisrael*, dated 1821, R. Noah, the son of R. Mordekhai of Lakhovich, specifically mentions R. Shelomo of Karlin, R. Barukh of Mezhibozh and his father R. Mordekhai, 'who were in the habit of supporting the poor of *Erets Yisrael*,' while ignoring the

activities of R. Shneur-Zalman in the same cause. V. supr., and W. Z. Rabinowitsch, *op. cit.*, p. 157.

¹²⁹ Cf., *infr.*, The Proclamation of R. Asher On Behalf of *Erets Yisrael*.

¹³⁰ Braver, *op. cit.*, *ibid.*

¹³¹ Cf. supr., the postscripts made by R. Aharon the Great in the Nesvitzh *pinkas*.

in our gift . . . and their good deeds shall never fail us. And you, sons of the Living God . . . do you help each other. Let each one say to his brother, "Be strong and of good courage in the service of the Lord!" Let them strengthen the hands of those engaged in the work . . . by bringing the money to the House of the Lord, that their contribution may last for ever . . . We are further obliged to make it known to our dearly beloved Jewish brethren . . . since in every town and village there are dissenters . . . who also desire the important office for themselves and their own benefit, who call evil good and . . . wilfully weaken the hands of those that are performing this *mitsvah* . . . This one comes with a claim of priority: Why was he not given the performance of this *mitsvah*, since he would have carried it out more properly? . . . Beware of men like these, whose names are already known . . . Know full well that the Rabbi and *Gaon*, the Righteous Priest, our Teacher and Master from the Land of Israel, has written about these men that they should know they are putting their own lives in danger . . . Moreover I shall make the facts known to all the honest *Tsaddikim* and hasidim . . . that all should know who they are . . . Again and again I have uttered the warning of our holy Law and the warning of all the *Tsaddikim* with whom my soul is bound up . . . Think not that this is a matter of no import, for it has been explicitly stipulated that all the holy money shall be handed over to me. God willing, we shall bring them receipts from the Land of Life [i.e., the Holy Land], them and their wives and children . . . May He bless you with abundance of strength and peace! Peace upon Israel! . . . From me, who write and sign on behalf of our brethren and on behalf of the Land [of Israel] and of those that dwell therein . . . May it be vouchsafed them to go up to Zion rejoicing . . . and may the light of our righteous Messiah shine forth . . .

'Asher, the son of our Master R. Aharon of blessed memory.'

This proclamation undoubtedly contains a reference to the quarrel between R. Avraham of Kalisk, who was at that time living in Palestine, and R. Shneur-Zalman, who was authorised to collect money for the Jewish community in Palestine.¹³² A number of other *Tsaddikim*, who had taken part in the fund-raising, were obliged to settle the dispute in favour of one or other of these two *Tsaddikim*. The pressure was particularly strong on the Lithuanian *Tsaddikim*, since

they lived in close proximity to R. Shneur-Zalman. R. Asher's proclamation proves that he regarded R. Avraham of Kalisk as the sole authorised collector: 'The Rabbi and *Gaon*, the Righteous Priest, our Teacher and Master from the Land of Israel.' Of R. Avraham's rivals he writes with great bitterness, warning his own followers to 'beware of men like these,' and announcing—doubtless on behalf of R. Avraham of Kalisk—that he, R. Asher, has been appointed to supervise the collection of money for the land of Israel.¹³³ Found amongst 'the holy writings' in the Stolin *genizah* were receipts for various sums of money sent by R. Asher to Palestine. The proclamation was written between 1801, when the dispute between R. Avraham of Kalisk and R. Shneur-Zalman was at its height,¹³⁴ and 1810, the year of R. Avraham's death.¹³⁵

In contrast to the humble and submissive tone which makes itself felt in the letter to R. Yisrael of Kozhenits and in the proclamation on behalf of the Jewish community in Palestine, a very different note is heard in R. Asher the First's letter to certain Jews who were desecrating the Sabbath in pursuance of their business. This letter, which is printed in *Beth Aharon*, was also found in the Stolin *genizah* bearing the address of certain salt merchants of Kremenets in Volhynia, some of whom used 'to eat at his table.' Here R. Asher appears in the role of stern castigator and does not shrink from upbraiding and rebuking the *Rabbanim*, 'the religious teachers of Israel,' who 'are paid by the community . . . to teach the Lord's people His ways . . . and should stand in the breach . . . and warn the children of Israel to keep well away from what is forbidden . . . Then why now . . . do they put . . . their hands to their mouths, and why are they thus silent? If they are small in their own eyes, let them remember that they are the leaders of the children of Israel.' He goes on to demand of them that 'wherever their authority rules, they should impose . . . enormous fines on this offence . . . and above all that they should exhort the mass of the people . . . to act with reverence for the teachers of the Law.'

This letter supplements what we have learnt about

¹³³ In other sources, however, it is stated that R. Avraham of Kalisk's emissary, R. Meir of Bykhov, appointed R. Mordekhai of Lakhovitch as head of the fund-collectors on behalf of *Erets Yisrael*. A. Yaari, *Sheluhei Erets Yisrael*, p. 625, Jerusalem 1951; Hilman, *Iggeroth Baal ha-Tanya*, pp. 177, 182.

¹³⁴ Yaari, *op. cit.*, p. 624.

¹³⁵ Dubnow, *Toledoth ha-Hasiduth*, p. 337.

¹³² Dubnow, *Toledoth ha-Hasiduth*, pp. 335–338.

the personality of R. Asher the First from his 'Rules of Right Conduct' and 'Exhortations' and from his other letters quoted above. It shows that, in the course of time R. Asher gained authority and recognition as a responsible leader of the Jewish masses, even though he himself admits that at first he refrained from upbraiding the *mithnagdim*, for fear that they would not listen to him. 'When I heard this . . . I said to myself that I had better be silent and refrain from words of censure.' It was only, writes R. Asher further on in his letter, 'when I discovered that the men who raised their hands were themselves of those . . . that eat at my table . . . that I thought I might have the power to protest. Perhaps it is my task to warn them that they should hearken to my voice. I have come to perform my duty. For that I will raise my voice.' In contrast to what we know of the early days of hasidism, when the founder of the new movement sought to protect the simple Jew from the harshness of the *Rabbanim*, R. Asher now demands of the *Rabbanim* that they should 'impose enormous fines' on the desecrators of the Sabbath. A further piece of information provided by this letter is that, in those days, non-Jews were economically dependent on Jewish merchants who used to exploit this fact to compel 'them [the Gentiles] to desecrate their holy day, just as they [the Jews] desecrate their own holy day.' R. Asher protests vehemently against this attitude of the Jews to the Gentiles. The expression 'of those . . . that eat at my table,' used here by R. Asher to denote his own hasidim, is very characteristic, and corroborates the tradition of the Karlin hasidim about the existence of a 'table' in Stolin and Karlin in the time of R. Asher the First. The letter also provides confirmatory evidence that, already in R. Asher's day, there were Karlin hasidim in the town of Kremenets, which is situated in the southern part of Volhynia. The letter is undated, but must have been written after the struggle with the *mithnagdim* had ended and R. Asher was firmly established in his 'court'—most probably in the twenties of the nineteenth century.

Among the small number of writings left by R. Asher the First, there is an incomplete collection of expositions of the Readings of the Law for Sabbaths and Festivals, which were published in *Beth Aharon*. In form and content, R. Asher's expositions are similar to those of most of the hasidic teachers of that time, being built around words and verses from the biblical text and interspersed with quotations from the

Midrash and the *Zohar*, interpreted according to hasidic and kabbalistic concepts. R. Asher several times quotes the exegesis of R. Shelomo of Karlin, introducing the quotations with the words: 'And I heard from the lips of my holy Teacher, R. Shelomo, may his soul rest in bliss!' This form of words tends to confirm that the expositions were actually written by R. Asher himself. On the other hand, in another place we read: 'When R. Asher returned home from visiting the holy and revered Rabbi of Mezhibozh, he related in his name'; or again, 'he gave precise details,' using the third person. Some idea of R. Asher's conception of hasidism, his way of worship, and his humanity can be obtained from several of the sayings attributed to him, like those quoted by R. Aharon the Second: 'I once heard my revered Father, Teacher and Rabbi say, "Know whence [Heb. *me-ayin*] you have come—that means, Know that you have come from nothing" [Heb. *me-ayin*]. And again: "A man must count every day, every moment and all the days of the year"; "Happy the man that fears always—that means, Fears Him Who is always there"; "Knowledge is of Me—that means, what is of Me is knowledge, and what is not of Me is not Knowledge"; "The true mark of hasidism is the love of one's fellow-men"; "Men think that the Holy one Blessed Be He dwells in glory in the heavens above, in the loftiest heights, but no—the Holy One Blessed Be He dwells on the earth below, in the lowest places of the earth, and everyone can reach Him, even the smallest and most insignificant Jew can reach Him"; "For Thou hearest the prayer of every mouth—even if it is only from the mouth."'

The hasidim relate that R. Asher was once asked by a hasid: 'Can I really repent, when I have committed a sin of which it is written in the books that repentance is of no avail to annul it?' R. Asher replied: 'What has this to do with you? Your business is to perform your duty. If you fear that you have forfeited your portion in the world to come, remember what our Sages of blessed memory have said—One hour spent in true contrition and in good works in this world is better than all the life of the world to come.' R. Asher's opinion of the *Tsaddik's* function is indicated by the following story. R. Asher expressed his displeasure with those hasidim that would speak of what was good in their deeds and keep silent about what was bad. To these he used to say: 'Look at the difference between the early hasidim and their latter-

day followers! When today's hasidim welcome their Rebbe they show him the good and conceal from him the bad, whereas the early hasidim used to conceal the good and tell the bad. That is what I used to do when I visited my teacher R. Shelomo of Karlin. I used to hide the good from him. Is he in God's place? Does he dispense reward and punishment? But the bad I used to reveal to him. As it is written: "If any man be afflicted with leprosy, he shall be brought to the priest and the priest shall see it." (Lev. xiii, 9.)

Amongst the 'holy writings' found at Stolin were the following letters from and to R. Asher the First: a letter of encouragement from R. Asher (quoted above) to a certain R. Yosef of Pinsk about the persecution of R. Asher's followers by 'this man' [R. Avigdor of Pinsk];¹³⁶ a detailed letter to one of his own followers, written just before the 'Penitential Days' [*ha-Yamim ha-Noraim*], explaining the value and importance of the hasidic-style prayers on *Rosh Hashanah* and stressing, not the element of 'judgment' in these Penitential Days, but rather the joy and confidence expressed in them;¹³⁷ a letter (dated the day after *Sukkoth*, 1801) from R. Yisrael of Kozhenits to R. Asher after the death of the latter's wife, in which the writer expresses a high regard for the widow of R. Aharon 'the Silent' of Zhelikhov [or for his daughter?]; a letter of New Year Greetings to R. Asher from the *Tsaddik* R. Yehoshua-Heshel of Apta; various letters from R. Asher to his son, R. Aharon, about journeys and family affairs; a list of R. Asher's books, and of his lucky charms and other proved means of warding off illnesses. Also found in the Stolin *genizah* were the following letters belonging to R. Asher's period: the will of the *Tsaddik* R. Mordekhai of Kremenets, the son of R. Yehiel-Mikhal of Zlochov, whose daughter married R. Asher's son; a letter from R. Avraham of Kalisk to R. Nahum of Chernobyl about a contribution of money for *Erets Yisrael*; a letter (dated 1796) from the *Tsaddik* R. Yehudah-Leib of Sasov to his followers;¹³⁸ a letter from R. Mordekhai of Chernobyl to R. Shemaryahu of Olevsk about the ritual slaughterer's licence granted to the *shohet* Yaakov Koppel and his son, who were the cause of communal dissension in the town, and a second letter (1810) from R. Yehoshua-Heshel of Apta, who was

at that time in Mezhibozh, also about the ritual slaughterers of Olevsk; a letter from R. Barukh of Mezhibozh (dated Sunday, Portion of the Week *Va-Yakhel*, 1810) to a certain R. Yaakov-Shimshon about the journey of a family to Rashkov; a letter from the *Tsaddik* R. David Halevi of Stepan to the Jews of the town Rokitno about their behaviour; and a letter from R. Pinhas of Korets and R. Yehiel-Mikhal of Zlochov. The search of the Stolin *genizah* brought to light no letters from R. Shneur-Zalman of Ladi.

One of the 'holy writings' found in the *genizah* was, then, the will of the *Tsaddik* R. Mordekhai of Kremenets, the son of R. Yehiel-Mikhal of Zlochov and, as stated, a relative by marriage of R. Asher. Part of this will is quoted below, to show the spiritual character of this *Tsaddik* who was the father-in-law of R. Aharon the Second of Karlin.

'Last Will and Testament, on the fifth day of the week, in the month of Tammuz, [5]580 [=1820].

Now my sons, be strong in the Law of the Lord and in pious awe [*yirah*] of Him, and in prayer.

This shall be the order of your praying: Accustom yourselves to rise early and do not spend time on your ablutions... but forthwith say all the blessings and the *hatsoth* prayer [in memory of the destruction of the Temple], followed by passages from the Psalms. Avoid all speaking before prayer, except what is absolutely necessary. Then, stand up to pray in reverence and awe, stressing every single word; and put aside all worldly thoughts while praying, for the time of prayer is when we are most tempted to indulge in vain worldly thoughts, and therefore you must be very strong against this temptation and request the Lord's help to resist it. If you wish to pray before the Ark [i.e., to lead the prayers in the Synagogue], so much the better, for most certainly I would have you do this; but let it be only for the Lord alone, and not for the worshipper's own pleasure... Straight after the prayer be sure to study... And above all let it be done with all your heart and soul... If you go in the true way, it will be granted you to understand the profound meaning of prayer.

Order of Study

... Study *Mikra* [the Bible], *Mishnah*, *Gemara*, and the *Posekim* and *Musar* [moral] literature daily. Study a section of the *Aggadah* before sleeping; and on no account lie down to sleep with your head full

¹³⁶ W. Z. Rabinowitsch, '*Mn ha-Genizah ha-Stolinit*', *Zion*, 5th year, p. 244; cf. *supr.*

¹³⁷ *Beth Aharon*, by R. Aharon of Karlin, p. 294.

¹³⁸ Rabinowitsch, *Lithuanian Hasidism*, p. 156.

of idle matters, but only with thoughts of penitence . . . Then you will go in the true way and attain to the wisdom of the *Kabbalah*. After midnight is the time for the *Kabbalah*, and you must on no account break off your study in the middle. The essential thing is that it be done with reverence and awe, with humility and self-abasement, and that each one should withdraw completely into himself while studying and confess and entreat the Divine Name to help him in attaining to the innermost meaning of the Law and to devotion [*devekuth*] to the Creator. This I have attempted to do with God's help, and you, too, will surely be aided by Heaven. I admonish you to obey me, as sons are in duty bound to obey their father, for your own good in this world and the next.

Rules for Right Conduct

Keep far away from anger, pride, honour, and dissension. If (Heaven forbid!) there should be any dissension in the town where you dwell, be among the peace-makers and do not take either side in the dispute. All the more so shall you beware of dissension in your own house, and you shall take great care that peace and love prevail between you, as becomes brothers. In every matter of conduct you shall consult each other. Beware of idling and watching the markets and the streets, for the evil impulse blinds man's eyes and says that this is a small matter. But in reality it separates the soul from the true essence of life. Accustom yourself always to speak gently with everyone and to answer softly, and not coarsely (Heaven forbid!), even with the least of men. By this you will make yourselves beloved of Him Above and popular with those below. And the Divine Name will certainly be with you.

Solemn Injunction to Honour Your Mother

Take very great care indeed to honour your mother, in body and in spirit and in all her needs, and to consult and obey her, in everything speaking to her respectfully and most politely. Let not even a single day pass without your going to her and speaking to her. Only if you are not in your homes are you excused. All this that I enjoin you to do is very little . . .

Solemn Injunction to My Daughters-in-Law

You, my daughters-in-law, do I solemnly enjoin to treat your husbands with due respect. Do not upset your husbands in any matter, but always speak to

them affectionately. I most solemnly enjoin you to refrain from bad language, above all (Heaven forbid!) to your husbands and children. I absolutely forbid this. If you obey me, you will be granted every happiness in this world and in the next. Know that your husbands are men of noble descent in Israel and it is therefore your duty to show them all manner of respect, and by so doing you will be bringing honour to yourselves.'

R. Asher the First, 'the old man of Stolin' as the Karlin hasidim affectionately called him, died on the 26th *Tishri*, 1826, at the age of 67.¹³⁹ The tomb of R. Asher, with a 'perpetual light' [*ner tamid*] always burning in it, stood in the Karlin cemetery next to the modest stone over the grave of his father, R. Aharon the Great. Into this tomb the caretaker of the last Rebbe, R. Elimelekh, who lived in Karlin, would insert the 'requests' written by the hasidim who used to visit the grave in time of trouble.

F. R. Aharon the Second (1826—1872)

R. Asher's successor was his son, R. Aharon [Perlov] the Second (so called to distinguish him from his grandfather, R. Aharon the Great), who was born, according to a family tradition, on the New Moon of *Sivan*, 1802.¹⁴⁰ R. Aharon was the recognised leader of the Karlin hasidim for nearly fifty years. The information that we possess about his life and time comes partly from hasidic sources and partly from the circles of *mithnagdim* and *maskilim*. A gifted organiser, R. Aharon applied himself to strengthening the bonds between himself and his followers. To this end, he used to pay them frequent visits in their towns and welcome them most warmly in his 'court' in Karlin. He also had a striking natural simplicity and sense of humour, and regularly made jokes in the Russian vernacular even while teaching his hasidim at his 'table'. He mixed freely with people of all kinds, and his confident and imposing presence was admired even in non-hasidic circles.

R. Aharon the Second's spiritual legacy, which is included in the volume *Beth Aharon*, comprises the following works: 'Daily Conduct and Exhortations'; a large, almost complete, collection of expositions

¹³⁹ *Beth Aharon*, p. 2; Shapiro, *Mishnath Hakhamim*, p. 39.

¹⁴⁰ Shapiro, *op. cit.*, p. 39. The family name of the Karlin dynasty—Perlov—is derived from 'Perl,' the name of R. Aharon the Great's mother.

of the Portions of the Law for Sabbaths and Festivals; 'Selected Sayings' in his name; letters written by R. Aharon to his followers on the eves of Festivals, especially on the eve of Passover; letters to his son, R. Asher; and 'Inspirational Sermons' to his followers, in Yiddish.¹⁴¹

The 'Daily Conduct and Exhortations' contains rules 'that he wrote . . . in his own holy hand': 'Although it is not my custom to write matters of this kind, since the earliest authorities, the holy ones of the Most High [sc. the *Tsaddikim*], have already written on the ordering of daily conduct . . . yet I have done so out of affection for our followers who have come . . . from afar, in the hope that . . . their hearts will drawn nigh to listen attentively to their studies.' In the same volume there are also rules 'that he discussed with our followers'; i.e., that were not actually written by R. Aharon, but handed down by the hasidim in his name. R. Aharon testifies: 'They are my true words, as recorded in books and by writers.' A comparison of these pronouncements with those of his father and with the 'Exhortations' of other earlier *Tsaddikim* shows that there is hardly anything new in R. Aharon's words. Nevertheless, together with his biblical interpretations and letters, they enable us to form a picture of Karlin hasidism in his time. R. Aharon stresses the qualities of 'awe and joyfulness,' of truth-seeking and purity of heart, and of 'study that issues in conduct.' 'Let those that are busy fix a regular time for religious study. And of those that have leisure it is said: "The study of the Law is their trade." The main thing is that some good quality

should be derived from the studying . . . Let them learn the *Mishnah*, the *Gemara* with the *Tosafoth*, the works of *Maharsho* [an acronym of the name R. Shemuel Edels] and the *Posekim*, each according to his ability, whether much or little.' 'There is a man that sits down to study on a full stomach without any soul-searching. After his studying, he is very proud of himself . . . and thinks: Who will the King delight in more than in me? . . . But by what is study measured by God? The *Torah* is given to study and perform . . . If anyone prays every day . . . "to study and to teach, to keep and to do and to perform," and then after his prayer does the opposite, this is a complete lie.' A man should endeavour 'to be absolutely honest, inwardly and outwardly,' 'close to the truth,' for 'by the truth we can attain to the highest degree'; 'above all . . . let his thoughts and words be the same . . . and let him not speak much about the vanities of the world and the new discoveries of the time, for this is a great source of idleness . . . Above all, every prayer and every study should not be just a routine religious act, but should be deliberately undertaken to bring the man closer to the will of God, according to his status and understanding . . . After the prayer, he should study the Bible, and in busy times at least *Hok le-Israel*, and sections of the *Mishnah* every day. The Holy One Blessed Be He counts not pages, but hours.'

In the rules for 'Daily Conduct' which his hasidim handed down in his name, he said: 'A Jew must be very dear to himself and must believe in himself, for all that he does is thereby much improved. We are not speaking of upper worlds, but only of his own world . . . Just let him not rise above his level nor fall below his level . . . Let him not look up above himself . . . nor down below himself . . . Every man must improve . . . his own station . . . Every Jew can attain to all the hidden treasure and is indeed obliged to attain to it . . . and will be purified and cleansed and whitened till he attains to the goodness and radiance of the Holy One Blessed Be He.' Like his grandfather R. Aharon the Great, R. Aharon the Second used to say: 'The greatest of all the vices is sadness and melancholy.' 'For melancholy is the cause of all the other vices.' 'Sadness results from . . . pride.' 'The sign of a broken heart is gladness.'

These principles and ideas are reiterated by R. Aharon the Second in the 'Holy Letters' that he wrote to his son, R. Asher, and to his followers. Altogether,

¹⁴¹ *Beth Aharon*, Brody 1875. The volume contains the following works by R. Aharon the Second: 'Daily Conduct and Exhortations' (pp. 6-10), Sermons of the Weekly Portion of the Law and for Festivals (pp. 42-285), 'Collected Sayings' (pp. 287-290), Words of Inspiration and Encouragement 'written down as uttered by his holy mouth,' in Yiddish (pp. 290-291), Letters to his son and his followers (pp. 297-312, 316), 'Words of Our Teachers,' in Yiddish (p. 313).

In *Divrei Aharon* (pp. 21-80), Hausman published twenty-four letters from R. Aharon the Second to his followers. Written chiefly for the various Festivals, these letters reflect R. Aharon's opinions on such questions as change of dress, and the like. Hausman's book contains various 'Sayings' attributed by the hasidim to R. Aharon the Second, and also corrections and additions to the volume *Beth Aharon* 'from old manuscripts which were written before the holy book *Beth Aharon* was published in the year 1875' (p. 60). See also his book *Birkhath Aharon*, pp. 79-127. Cf. *infr.* n. 161.

R. Aharon's writings and homilies had a considerable influence on the character and conduct of the Karlin hasidim. In particular, it was through him that Karlin hasidism came to attach such great importance—perhaps greater than any other section of the hasidic movement—to joyfulness. R. Aharon the Great, according to hasidic tradition, regarded joyfulness as simply the avoidance of sadness. Whereas R. Aharon the Second used to stress the positive aspect of joyfulness as the active and fructifying principle in life. Thus, he would sum up the allegory of R. Elimelekh of Lizhensk in a single sentence: There is light in the world, only it has been hidden away by the Holy One Blessed Be He, so that every Jew is obliged to seek this light, and all Jews, 'even the smallest of the small and the lowest of the low' can find it.

The period of R. Aharon the Second's 'leadership' coincided with the reign of terror under the Tsar Nicolas I, with its persecutions, anti-Jewish decrees, 'kidnappings' and the like. The joyfulness that R. Aharon laboured to implant in the hearts of his followers undoubtedly helped them to bear the trials and tribulations of those difficult days. For a long time afterwards popular stories were told about the courage displayed, both in private and public, by R. Aharon's hasidim in their time of trouble. It was thanks to R. Aharon's encouraging influence that the numbers of the Karlin hasidim increased still further in his time, over and above the increase that had occurred in the days of R. Asher the First. This was the heyday of Karlin hasidism. On Festivals and on Penitential Days the hasidim would leave their wives and families and make the pilgrimage to their Rebbe in Karlin. On *Shavuoth* and *Simhath Torah* as many as three to four thousand—according to an eye-witness report—would come thronging to his residence. 'He who has not seen *Simhath Torah* in the court of R. Aharon'—so used the hasidic elders to say—'has never seen a real celebration of *Simhath Torah*.' Here is the scene as described by an eye-witness: R. Aharon would be sitting clothed all in white, as was his custom on Sabbaths and Festivals, at the head of the long table that stood in the large courtyard next to his prayer-house. Tens of canopies stretched above the court hardly sufficed as shelter for the crowds of hasidim that came to their Rebbe for *Simhath Torah*. When, at the *maariv* [evening] service, R. Aharon himself led the prayers, the worshippers were carried

away by spiritual ecstasy, and the 'circuits' of the Scrolls were performed in a frenzy of jubilation that rose ever higher, circuit by circuit, song by song, and dance by dance, as the wine flowed freely. Thus transported, the hasidim would spend the whole night singing and dancing in the courtyard and the nearby streets. Out of this fervent rejoicing were born many of the Karlin melodies that subsequently became famous in hasidic circles and even throughout Jewry. Nor was this the case only at *Simhath Torah*. Every Festival had its own melodies. Outstanding amongst these were the tunes of the Passover *Seder* night of which, according to the hasidim, R. Aharon used to say: 'In my Passover melodies, there is not one crumb of leaven.' In addition to songs and dances, R. Aharon introduced instrumental music and had two orchestras—one of them made up of his followers from Volhynia—which used to play *melavveh malkah*, on the intermediate days of *Sukkoth* and similar occasions.

During these visits to the Rebbe's 'court,' the hasid would forget the bitter, dreary, care-ridden reality of his daily life and find a refuge for his tired body and weary spirit. Freed for a while of his cares by the general rejoicing, he would be uplifted into a state of self-forgetfulness. This spiritual exaltation and tense expectancy reached their climax on *Rosh Hashanah* before the blowing of the *shofar*, when R. Aharon, having 'purified himself' in the *mikveh* and carrying three or four *shofars* thrust into the silver girdle encircling his white *kittel*, would make his way through the throng of worshippers to the pulpit, where, after fervently reciting the forty-seventh Psalm ['To the sons of Korah'], he would perform the commandment of 'hearing the sound of the *shofar*'—'hearing is in the heart,' as he preached in one of his sermons on *Rosh Hashanah*. On one of his *shofars* were engraved the words: 'God has gone up with a trumpet blast.'

This intensely shared life of the Rebbe and his hasidim was something alien in the prevailingly mithnaged environment of Pinsk. The element of a personal cult in hasidism—the hasid's reverence for his *Tsaddik*—was completely foreign to the 'scholars' of this 'principal community.' Moreover, the mithnagdim still at that time held to their view that hasidism discouraged the study of the *Talmud* and thereby had an adverse effect on Lithuanian talmudic scholarship. Thus, for example, the then *Av Beth-Din* of Pinsk, R. Elazar-Moshe Hurwitz, is reported to have adopted a hostile attitude to hasidism and even to R. Aharon

himself.¹⁴² And once, on the fourth intermediate day of *Sukkoth*, when R. Aharon and his followers had been rejoicing after their fashion, singing and dancing in the streets of Karlin, one of the leading local mithnaged families—Lourié—who lived in the neighbourhood, enraged by having their peace disturbed for days and nights on end, used their influence to have the Russian authorities order R. Aharon to leave Karlin. He withdrew to his old place of refuge—Stolin. This event shows that sectarian bitterness had not yet completely died away even at this late date, exactly a hundred years after the first *minyán* of the Karlin hasidim was established in this town, in an atmosphere of hostile pressure and actual persecution.

The writer and poet, Y. L. Gordon, who, as a young teacher in Pinsk—in the Lourié household—became closely acquainted with the life led by the Karlin hasidim, has given us, in the story *Olam ke-Minhago*, a highly critical and even repellent picture of R. Aharon the Second and his hasidic milieu.¹⁴³ Despite the

¹⁴² *Toyzend Yor Pinsk*, ed. Hofman, p. 267 ff., Hadmin Havraya, 'Hithgalluth ha-Yenuka bi-Stolin,' *Hashahar*, Vol. VI, p. 33 ff., Vienna 1875; the Rabbi from P. [i.e., Pinsk] referred to by the author of this article was, at that time, R. Elazar-Moshe Hurwitz, of whom Perets Smolenskin writes in such glowing terms: Mossessohn, 'Masa be-Russia,' *Hashahar*, Vol. VI, p. 357.

¹⁴³ Y. L. Gordon, *Olam ke-Minhago*, the second story—*Aharith Simhah Tugah*, Vilna 1873. In contrast to Gordon's description of the lack of respect shown to R. Aharon by the Russian authorities, there is the evidence of one of the Karlin elders, R. Mordekhai Kerman, himself a mithnaged and *maskil*, who was an eyewitness of R. Aharon's expulsion. In describing this event, he related that, when the Pinsk Minister of Police summoned R. Aharon to his office, he sent a special coach to fetch him, but R. Aharon refused to travel in it, for fear that there might be a *shaatnez* [a forbidden mixture of wool and linen] in the upholstery. R. Mordekhai Kerman further relates that, when R. Aharon refused to desecrate the Festival—it was the day of *Hoshana Rabbah*—by writing, he was not compelled to sign an undertaking to leave the town. Y. L. Gordon's story is quoted by the writer H. Chemerinski in his memoirs *Ayarathi Motele*, p. 176, Tel Aviv 1951.

The expulsion of R. Aharon the Second from Karlin is also mentioned in hasidic literature: *Meoroth ha-Gedolim*, ed. by R. Aharon Tseilingold, Pt. III, pp. 30, 34, Bilgoray (no date of publication).

About his story *Aharith Simhah Tugah*, Gordon writes as follows in one of his letters to his pupil Aharon Lourié of Pinsk (Y. L. Gordon, *Iggeroth*, Vol. I, pp. 121, 185, Warsaw 1895): 'Let me know... how

purely fictional and personal elements in this description, it nevertheless contains references to certain historical facts, such as the quarrel between the hasidim and the Lourié family, and the expulsion of R. Aharon from Karlin by order of the Russian police. The fear of the hasidim, which is stressed in the story, induced the author to give his characters fictitious names: R. Aharon appears as R. Leibele, his son R. Asher the Second as R. Herschele, Hayyah Lourié is called Yokheved, and Karlin is changed to Krimvilishek. The whole story is a most important historical document, as showing what the leading poet of the *Haskalah* movement thought of hasidism.

The exact year of R. Aharon's forced move from Karlin to Stolin is not known. Y. L. Gordon gives [on pages 107 and 154 of the above-mentioned story] the following as the date of R. Aharon's expulsion: 'October 1st, the 21st of *Tishri*, the day of *Hoshana Rabbah*, the fourth day of the week.' But the year is intentionally omitted: '...in the year... (the number being deleted).' Now, a glance at the calendar shows that, throughout the relevant period, these dates never

your revered grandmother, Hayyah, is... I have several stories ready for publication... among them one called *Aharith Simhah Tugah*. The heroes of this story, which is based on actual events in the life of the hasidim... are your revered grandmother... and father. I have, of course, been careful not to mention their names, but all those who know them will recognise them, for they are a 'seed blessed of the Lord.' When you read my story, you will easily recognise the identity of the nasty people referred to.' See also Gordon, *Iggeroth*, Vol. I, p. 95, Letter of 1864; cf., W. Z. Rabinowitsch, *The 'Rothschilds' of Pinsk and Karlin*, Pt. I of this Volume, English Section, p. 81, Tel Aviv, 1973.

In an article, 'Gad-Asher Levin' (no author's name), in the *Pinsker Stot Luah*, 1904, p. 41, note, Vilna 1903–1904, we find the following: 'Hayyah Lourié was, in her day, a well-known character... All her life, she actively opposed the hasidim and carried on a personal feud with the *Tsaddik*, R. Aharon of Karlin.' On R. Shaul Karliner see: A. Lourie, 'Di Tsavoe fun a Pinsker Baal-Bayith fun Onheyb 19ten Yorhundert,' *YIVO Bleter*, Vol. XIII, pp. 390–428, Vilna 1938, and *Toyzend Yor Pinsk*, p. 87, note, where the broadsheet, 'Ein Onshin Ela Mazhirin' ['No Punishment, but a Warning']—v. infr.—is also quoted. This broadsheet was originally published by Y. Gottlieb, *Pinsker Wort*, No. 75. I have not actually seen this article. Excerpts from reminiscences about R. Aharon the Second and his time can be found in Mordekhai Kerman's memoirs *Meine Zikhreines (Hundert Yor Pinsk)*, published as stencil, without place or year of duplication.

all fell on the same day. That means that their choice is either the storyteller's mistake, or a deliberate inaccuracy on his part. Another piece of evidence is a letter, written by R. Aharon the Second to his son-in-law R. Avraham-Yaakov, the son of R. Yisrael of Sadagora, 'on the fifth day of the week, on the 17th of the month of *Av*, in the year [5]626 [=1866]', which is extant in the original hand in the family archives. From this letter it transpires that, in the year mentioned, R. Aharon was living in Stolin. In a letter to Aharon, the son of Moshe Lourié in Pinsk, dated the 7th of *Av* [5]624 [=1864], Y. L. Gordon writes: 'The town where the Rebbe is living is close to you. (But is he still in Stolin? Or has he chosen another royal city for his residence? Is R. Aharele [R. Aharon] still reigning, or has his son R. Asherl [R. Asher the Second] already succeeded him on the throne?).' From this it may be deduced that R. Aharon the Second was already living in Stolin in the year 1864.

That the mutual hatred between the *mithnagdim* and the *hasidim* was still very much alive in the nineteenth century is evident from two further facts. One of the finest, most devoted, and most influential of Karlin Jewry's public figures, R. Shaul Levin (the father of the above-mentioned Hayyah Lourié), who was known as R. Shaul Karliner, specifically forbade his sons and heirs, in his will (he died in 1834), to have anything to do with the *hasidim*.

In connection with the bequests to charity made by R. Shaul Karliner in this will, we read as follows: 'A clear inventory of all my property and effects . . . shall be drawn up and recorded . . . and signed by the heirs, together with my wife . . . and the *Rav* who shall be the communal *Av Beth-Din* at that time. If the *Rav* at that time is a member of the sect of the *hasidim*, then, with the consent of my wife and sons, another *Rav* shall be added to the signatories [i.e., instead of the *Rav*], the *hasid*, or some upright and honest person . . .' In a similar vein, R. Shaul Karliner gives the following instructions to those of his next of kin to whom he entrusted the management of the charities to be paid out of his estate: '... Everything shall at all times be conducted and managed on the principle of relatives first, provided that they are upright and respectable men, and not of the sect of the *hasidim* . . . Even of the relatives it is laid down that they shall not be of the above-mentioned sect, and if they are [members of the sect] they shall be disqualified. Only those that are truly God-fearing shall be taken

care of, but none of them [sc. the *hasidim*] . . . All the inventory shall be clearly and exactly written [on every anniversary of the death] in a notebook and shall be signed also by whoever shall then be the *Rav* or *Moreh-Tsedek*, but not if he is a member of the sect of the *hasidim*, so that the matter may be finally and permanently arranged and settled.'

These excerpts from the will show the depth of the hatred and anger felt against the *hasidim*, even on his death-bed, by the leader of the Karlin community in the thirties of the nineteenth century. His opinion of the *hasidim* is expressed in his explicit instruction that the money for charity bequeathed by him shall be devoted 'to some upright and honest person . . . to those that are truly God-fearing . . . so that the matter may be finally and permanently arranged and settled.' All these qualities are denied the *hasidim* by R. Shaul Karliner. The extent of the influence of the *hasidim* in Karlin in those days can be inferred from R. Shaul's fear that one of them might be chosen as the *Rav* of Karlin. Evidently, the conditions in the community were then such as to make this possible. In fact, however, no *hasid* became the *Rav* of the Karlin or Pinsk communities at any time during the nineteenth century.

On the other side, the Karlin *hasidim* as late as 1870–1871 published a broadsheet headed 'No Punishment, but A Warning,' full of abuse and threats against the *mithnagdim*.

Like his father before him, R. Aharon the Second gave his support to the *hasidic* settlers in Palestine, who were then going through hard times. When an emissary came from Palestine to collect money on their behalf, R. Aharon wrote the following letter (undated in the original) to his *hasidim*:¹⁴⁴

'To our beloved followers . . . may they all be rewarded! I write . . . in praise of our Land, the Land of Life, the place to which our prayers are directed . . . the Holy of Holies . . . Let our brethren the Children of Israel unite . . . with a single heart and with worship that comes from the heart—that is, by prayer . . . Who am I . . . to go on and on in praise of such exalted matters? . . . However, my spirit gives me no peace, because of . . . the oppression of the times. For it is now several years that the Lord has called up a famine on the Land, and thousands of precious souls and their children are going hungry with none to offer

¹⁴⁴ *Beth Aharon*, p. 316.

them bread. Moreover, I have seen that letters written with passionate fervour by all the great ones of Israel to arouse the hearts of our brethren the Children of Israel have borne fruit and succeeded. Therefore am I writing now to my loyal followers [to tell them] that my friend the learned and venerable Rabbi... Avraham-Yosef... the grandson of the holy Rabbi and *Gaon* of Volochisk... the son-in-law of my kinsman, my dear friend the renowned hasid... R. Naf-tali-Tsevi... the grandson of the holy *Baal Shem Tov*, has been sent from the Holy Land to collect fresh funds to keep alive our brethren dwelling in the centre of holiness [i.e., in the Holy Land]. I am therefore writing this letter to urge all our followers... to welcome its bearer, my friend the Rabbi, warmly and to arouse your hearts to participate... generously... to uphold their dwelling in the Holy Land... From me, who love you and send you affectionate greetings and desire your good, and your affection, your unity, and your attachment to the Source of Life...'

In the second, also undated, letter found in the Stolin *genizah* from R. Aharon the Second to his hasidim, we read as follows:

'May the Lord give life and blessing... to our brethren the Children of Israel wherever they be... long life and peace to them, their households and their offspring... for ever.

'I have taken up my pen... to write words from the heart to the heart... that you should freely and generously make your contributions out of love for the Holy Land... the Land for which the Lord cares and which is mentioned in all the prayers... of the community of Israel... The Divine Name has vouchsafed us the fulfilment of the desire of our holy forefathers, that there should be some of our loyal supporters in the Land of Life [i.e., the Holy Land]... With the Lord's help they have found a resting place for a group of our followers who devote themselves to the study of *Torah* and to prayer, where the feet of the holy *Tsaddikim* trod... a permanent place for prayer from the holy... *Tsaddik*... Menahem... whose pious hands established the holy place. With the Lord's help our followers have succeeded in purchasing the holy place that was granted to no other man. Thus far has the Divine Name aided our brethren, the Children of Israel, but they still require fur-

ther assistance, especially our own followers... You should, therefore, aid and support them generously, so that by their purchase they should have their share in the Holy Land... I am confident that our brethren, the Children of Israel will pay heed to these my words... May we be granted in abundance... all that our hearts desire, for good and for blessing... from the Lord of Peace...

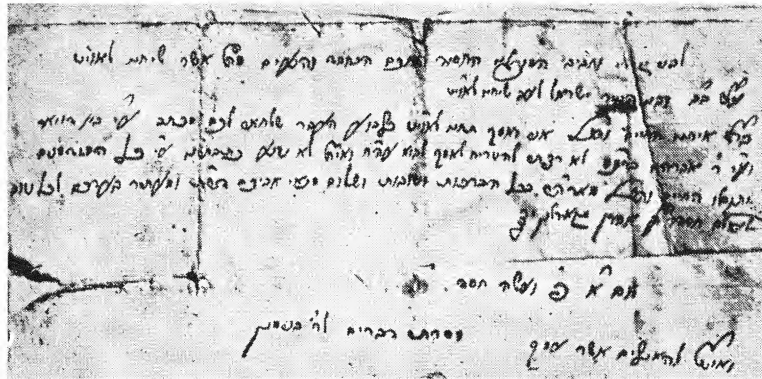
'The words of Aharon, the son of R. Asher.'

From a comparison of these two letters it is evident that, in the period between the dates when they were written, a group of Karlin hasidim established themselves in the Holy Land and bought the prayer-house in Tiberias which had previously been purchased by R. Mendel of Vitebsk.¹⁴⁵ Also found in the Stolin *genizah* were deeds of sale relating to houses bought by R. Aharon in Tiberias and Jerusalem, as well as a letter from the recipients of the *halukkah* to R. Aharon, appointing him as the 'chief general administrator' of all the funds sent to Palestine, and his son, R. Asher the Second, as his assistant.

Altogether, the Land of Israel [*Erets Yisrael*] occupied an important place in Karlin hasidism; and conversely, Karlin hasidim played a significant role in the history of hasidism in the Land of Israel. The son of R. Aharon the Great, R. Yaakov, settled with his family and his father-in-law, R. Avraham of Karlin, in Palestine and died there.¹⁴⁶ R. Asher the First wrote the public proclamation—quoted above—in support of Jewish settlers in Palestine. And amongst the papers found in the Stolin *genizah* there were, as already stated, receipts for sums of money sent by R. Asher to Palestine. In the credentials carried by an emissary sent by the Jews of Tiberias, in 1846, to collect money for Palestine—R. Moshe Yafe—we find included amongst the signatures of 'the leaders of the

¹⁴⁵ R. Aharon's letter, which was written after the purchase of the prayer-house belonging to R. Mendel of Vitebsk (according to a hasidic source, after the Passover Festival of 1872), was published, with slight alterations, by Shapiro in *Mishnath Hakhamim*, p. 40; Cf., Hausman, *Divrei Aharon*, p. 74.

¹⁴⁶ Grossman, *Shem u-Sheerith*, p. 89; Kleinbaum, *Shema Shelomo*, Pt. II, p. 26. The immigration of R. Avraham of Karlin and his companions to Palestine was evidently regarded as an event of considerable moment: it was mentioned—as Hilman points out—(*Iggeroth Baal ha-Tanya*, p. 145, n. 9)—thirty years later by Avigdor of Pinsk, in one of the documents submitted by him to the Russian government in St. Petersburg.



Letter from R. Aharon the Second of Karlin
to his son R. Asher the Second

holy community of God-fearing Ashkenazi Jews... of the community of Volhynia...' that of a certain 'Moshe-Dov, the son of the Rabbi and Teacher Aharon of blessed memory from Stolin.' This Moshe-Dov was the step-brother of R. Aharon the Second.¹⁴⁷ Further evidence of the specially close connection between Karlin hasidism and Palestine is provided by the deeds of sale relating to houses in the name of R. Aharon the Second in Jerusalem and Tiberias (which were found, as stated, in the Stolin *genizah*); and also by the letter written by R. Aharon after the purchase of the house and plot of land belonging to R. Mendel of Vitebsk by the Karlin hasidim in Tiberias. Detailed information about the exact date when this group established itself and about the early days of its existence is lacking. What is certain is that it was not until the second half of the nineteenth century, with the break-up of the various hasidic communities in Palestine into separate dynasties, that the special Karlin group arose with its own *shtiebelakh* [hasidic prayer-houses] in Tiberias, Safed, and Jerusalem. It is worth stressing that, as far as is known to

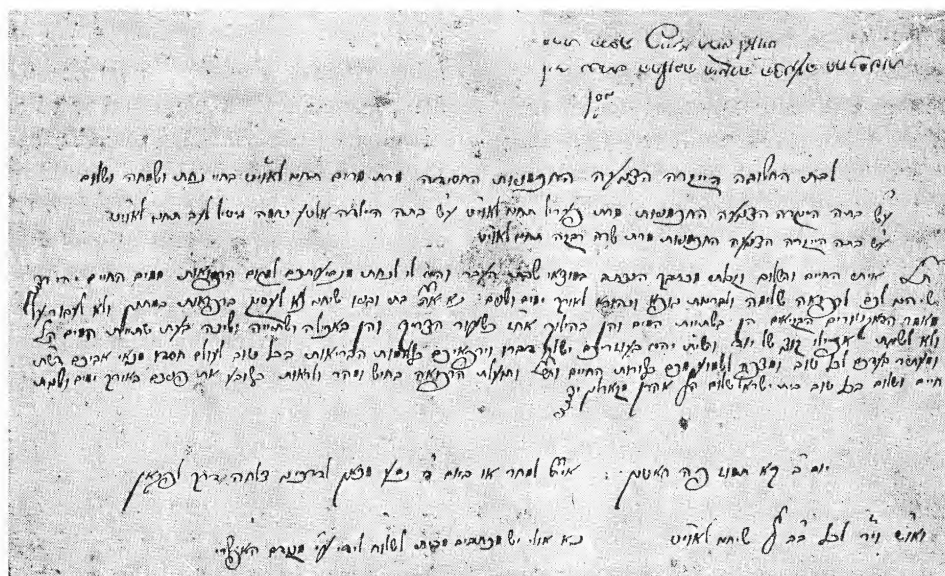
¹⁴⁷ Yaari, *Sheluhei Erets Yisrael*, p. 788. Cf., the letter, quoted above, from R. Asher to R. Yisrael of Kozhenits, in which the name of R. Moshe-Dov is mentioned. This R. Moshe-Dov was the son of R. Aharon 'the silent' of Zhelikhov (Grossman, *Sheerith li-Sheerith*, pp. 13, 20, supplement to *Shem u-Sheerith*, no place or year of publication). According to hasidic tradition, it was R. Moshe-Dov that originally instituted the Karlin *minyanim* in the Holy Land. Together with the signature of R. Moshe-Dov on the letter from the Jews of Tiberias, we also find the signature of the 'Naf-tali Tsevi of the holy city of Tiberias' who is mentioned by R. Aharon the Second in the letter quoted above, on behalf of the emissary from Palestine.

us, the fund-raising emissaries from Palestine who came originally from Pinsk and its environs (R. Hayyim the son of the *Gaon* of Karlin, R. Barukh the son of R. Shemuel, R. Avraham *Dayyan* Wolfsohn, R. Avraham the son of R. Tsevi Eisenstein of Drohichin, R. Shemuel-Muni Zilberman¹⁴⁸) were all *perushim* (i.e., *mithnagdim*) and disciples of the *Gaon* of Vilna, and not Karlin hasidim. We likewise find men born in Pinsk at the head of the *mithnaged* community (the Pinsk *Av Beth-Din*, R. Hayyim Cohen, and R. Yeshayah the son of R. Yissakhar-Baer [Bar-dakil]).¹⁴⁹

Apart from the letters referred to above, the following documents from the time of R. Aharon the Second were also found in the Stolin *genizah*: (1) a letter from R. Yisrael of Sadagora (dated *Rosh Hodesh Teveth*, 1852?) in which the writer complains that he has no money to give the emissaries from *Erets Yisrael* and therefore requests R. Aharon to try to raise the sum required from among his hasidim; (2) a second short, friendly letter from R. Yisrael of Ruzhin (dated the 19th *Elul*, 1848) in which the writer congratulates R. Aharon and promises to pray on his behalf daily; (3) the regulations of a *Mishnah*-reading society in the small town of Yanovo, near Pinsk (dated the 10th *Nisan*, 1830), signed by R. Aharon: the members undertake to study passages from the *Mishnah* in memory of a Jew named Lapidoth, who had donated a Scroll of the Law to this society; (4) the reply of R. Shemuel-Avraham Sha-

¹⁴⁸ Yaari, *Sheluhei Erets Yisrael*, pp. 779, 780, 786, 798; see Ben-Ezra, 'Rabbi Avraham Eisenstein,' Drohichin, ed. D. B. Warshowski, p. 118 ff., Chicago 1958.

¹⁴⁹ Yaari, *op. cit.*, p. 769.



LETTER A

Letter from R. Aharon the Second of Karlin to his family

piro of Slavuta [the owner of the well-known printing press] to the invitation to R. Aharon's wedding; (5) a short prayer composed by R. Aharon, of which the members of the 'court' did not permit copies to be made; (6) a letter from R. Aharon to his followers about their regular payments to the 'court' funds. In one of his letters there is an interesting request of his to his family that they should not fast on *Taanith Esther*.

The three letters from R. Aharon the Second reproduced here contain his views on doctors (letter A), and also genealogical details of the Karlin-Ruzhin-Chernobyl dyasties (letters B, C).¹⁵⁰

Letter A.

'To my dear daughter... Miryam (may she be granted long life!)... and to my dear daughter

Perl... and to her young daughter Nehamah Gittl... and her dear daughter... Sarah Rivkah.

Thank God, I am alive and well. I received your letter written on the night of the last Sabbath, and I was pleased by your journey to the place of medicinal waters. May God grant that they bring you a complete cure and good health and many bright years of life!

My daughter and her sons (may you be granted long life!) pray handle medicines with moderation and do not disobey the doctors' orders, for they are expert in the drinking of waters, and in the amount of walking required after that, and also in eating and drinking and sleeping during the drinking of waters... and carry out their instructions to the letter. May the Holy One Blessed Be He help you and give you complete healing and good health, for His goodness is everlasting!

From your father... who prays for your welfare and eagerly waits to hear from you... about the beneficial effect of treatment...

Aharon of Karlin

¹⁵⁰ R. Yisrael's letter from Sadagora is dated—another piece of information that I owe to the late David-Tsevi Bakhilinski—*Rosh Hodesh Teveth*, 1852. However, this is evidently an error, since R. Yisrael of Ruzhin died on the 3rd *Heshvan*, 1850. These three letters were handed down from father to son and are now in the possession of the Rebbe R. Yitshak-Meir Heshel, the son of the *Tsaddik* R. Yisrael of Mezhibozh, the son-in-law of Miryam, daughter of R. Aharon the Second of Karlin. They are published here by his kind permission. The following are the sources used for the other genealogical details: Y. Alfasi, *Sefer ha-Admorim*, pp. 12, 26, Tel Aviv 1961; Grossman, *Shem*

u-Sheerith, pp. 37, 40—41, 61—63; Hausman, *Divrei Aharon*, pp. 247—249, and *Birkath Aharon*, pp. 66, 126; Horodezki, *op. cit.*, Pt. III, pp. 120, 122—123, 153, n. 20; Y. Levinstein, *Dor va-Dor ve-Dorshav*, p. 102, Warsaw, no date of publication; A. D. Tverski, *Sefer ha-Yahas Chernobyl ve-Ruzhin*, pp. 70, 120, 167—169, Lublin 1938.

The second day of the week, 21st *Tammuz*, here in Hotin. God willing, tomorrow or on the fourth day (?) we shall travel from here to Lapan, and I shall bring greetings and encouragement to all my household... If there are perchance letters from my home, please send them to me as soon as possible to Sadagora, to the address of my very dear granddaughter... Hadassah Feige...'

Miryam, the eldest daughter of R. Aharon the Second of Karlin, who is mentioned in this letter, was the wife of the *Tsaddik R. Avraham-Yaakov of Sadagora*, the son of the well-known *Tsaddik R. Yisrael* of Ruzhin. She died on the first day of *Sukkoth* 1880. According to a reliable hasidic source, she and her husband were married in Karlin, on 17th *Sivan* 1837. R. Avraham-Yaakov succeeded his father in Sadagora and followed his father's example of wealthy living, of paying great attention to the outward splendours of his 'court', and of stressing the importance in the hasidic movement of belief in the *Tsaddik*. He died in 1883.

Their daughter *Perl*, who is also mentioned in the letter, was married to her cousin, *R. Nahum-Dov of Sadagora*, the son of her father's brother R. Shalom-Yosef the eldest son of R. Yisrael of Ruzhin. After a short period as the Rebbe of Ruzhin, he lived the rest of his life with his family in the 'court' of his father-in-law, R. Avraham-Yaakov, in Sadagora. Here, with a good taste and understanding perhaps influenced by his having lived in Leipzig in his youth, he established a large, well-stocked library, which even contained some first printings. According to a hasidic source, R. Nahum-Dov was born in 1843, and died in 1883 in Vienna.

Sarah-Rivkah, mentioned in the body of the letter, and *Hadassah-Feige*, mentioned in the postscript, were daughters of Miryam and R. Avraham-Yaakov of Sadagora, the daughter and son-in-law of R. Aharon the Second. Sarah-Rivkah was the first wife of the *Tsaddik R. Yisrael of Mezhibozh*, a descendant of the *Tsaddik R. Avraham-Yehoushua Heshel* of Apta. Their wedding is the subject of the two letters from R. Aharon the Second printed below. Hadassah-Feige was the wife of the *Tsaddik R. Aviezri Zelig Shapira of Drohobich*, the son of the *Tsaddik R. Hayyim-Meir Yehiel* of Mogelnitsa, the grandson of the well-known Polish *Tsaddik*, R. Yisrael of Kozhenits. They and their descendants are mentioned below in the third letter of R. Aharon the Second.

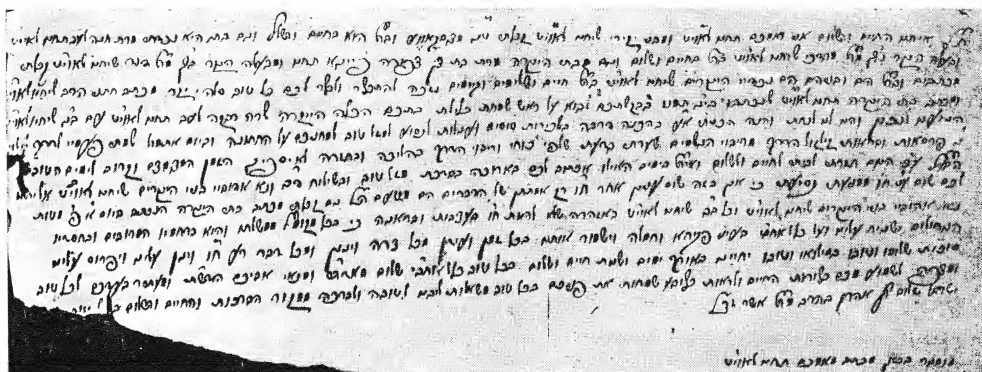
The identity of the young girl *Alte Nehamah Gittl*, mentioned in the letter, is not clear. In no hasidic source is there any reference to the fact that Miryam and R. Avraham-Yaakov of Sadagora had a daughter by this name. On the other hand, it is known that their daughter Perl, the wife of R. Nahum-Dov of Sadagora, had a daughter named *Gittelle*, the wife of the *Tsaddik, R. Moshe-Leib of Pashkan*, the son of the *Tsaddik R. Yitshak* of Buhush, who was also the son of R. Shalom-Yosef of Ruzhin. Hadassah-Feige, the eldest daughter of Miryam and R. Avraham-Yaakov, also had a daughter named *Gittelle*, who was the wife of the *Tsaddik R. Yisrael of Husyatyn* and is mentioned below in the third letter. Assuming that the first identification is correct, and that the reference here is to Perl's daughter Gittelle, since the name Gittl appears in the letter together with the name Perl, it may be concluded that this letter was written in the sixties of the 19th century: in the latter part of the fifties, Perl's future husband, the above-mentioned R. Nahum-Dov, returned to Ruzhin from Leipzig, at the age of 12, after his father's death there in 1851, and subsequently settled in Sadagora; and the letter was written after the birth of the daughter, *Alte-Nehamah-Gittl*, mentioned in it.

Hotin, where R. Aharon the Second wrote this letter, was a district capital in Bessarabia in which the descendants of the Chernobyl dynasty had a 'court' right down to the time of the Nazi Holocaust. This is also where the wedding took place of the son of Miryam (the daughter of R. Aharon the Second) and of R. Avraham-Yaakov of Sadagora, *R. Yitshak*, the founder of the *Boyan* dynasty.

Lepkan—Lipkany—was a small town in the above-mentioned district of Hotin. R. Aharon the Second wrote this letter on his way to this town.

Letter B.

'Thank God, I am alive and well, I and your mother... From my dear son... I received a telegram from Tsiskave and, thank God, he is alive and well... and also my granddaughter Hannah... and her dear husband... our Teacher and Master Mordekhai... are, thank God, alive and well, and my dear daughter... Tsipporah Feige... From her dear husband... David... I have received letters and they and their sons, my dear grandchildren... are, thank God, alive and completely well. May it be granted us to receive only good news from you and to send only good news to you. I was touched by the letter of my



LETTER B

Letter from R. Aharon the Second to his daughter Miryam and to his son-in-law
R. Avraham-Yaakov of Sadagora, July 1866

son-in-law . . . [R. Avraham-Yaakov of Sadagora] and of my dear daughter [Miryam] . . . which was written on the 13th (?) *Tammuz*, inviting me to the wedding of your daughter, the dear bride Sarah Rivkah . . . to her young man, and may we have satisfaction from them. Now . . . I made great preparations . . . and hired horses and carts to travel to you to bring good fortune for the wedding, and yesterday I set out . . . But when I saw the bad state of the road from the heavy rains, I calculated that, with my [limited] strength and the great distance there and back, I should not have sufficient time, for it is near to the Holy Days (may they bring us blessing!). Today, therefore, I returned home alive and well and, God, willing, in these days I shall write to you at length to wish you *mazzal tov* and to send you a present. But please, my dearly loved children . . . do not be in any way distressed (God forbid!) by my not being able to come, for there is no other reason for this, but only what I have truly told you. I have also received the letter of my daughter, which was written on the first day of the Portion of the Week *Mattoth*. Please, my dearly loved children . . . and all your household . . . let me admonish you not to be sad and anxious (God forbid!) . . . for He with His many mercies and great kindnesses will compassionately watch over us and over all our Jewish brethren, and preserve us at all times from any trouble and sorrow and from any harm (God forbid!), and protect us, and spread over us the tabernacle of His peace and the fullness of His goodness which will lengthen our days and ensure us years of life and well-being . . . To all our brethren peace from the Lord of Peace, and from me, your father . . . who prays on your behalf for every

blessing and expectantly waits to hear good news from you and to rejoice in seeing you happy . . . and for blessing from the Source of blessings, life and peace . . . Aharon the son of our Teacher and Master Asher (the righteous man of blessed memory).

Enclosed is a letter from your mother (may she be granted long life!).

The *Hannah* mentioned in this letter was the daughter of the *Tsaddik* R. Asher the Second of Stolin, the son of R. Aharon the Second. In 1859 she married the *Tsaddik* R. Mordekhai of Kuzmir, the son of R. Avraham of Trisk, the son of R. Mordekhai of Chernobyl. R. Mordekhai of Kuzmir died in 1917. This couple had no children.

Tsipporah-Feige, the younger daughter of R. Aharon the Second, who died in 1909, married in 1852 the *Tsaddik* R. David of Zlatopol, the son of R. Yohanan of Rahmistrivka (Rotmistrovka) who was also a son of R. Mordekhai of Chernobyl. R. David died in 1914. Their daughter, *Berakhah-Sheindl*, married in 1883 her cousin, the son and heir of R. Asher the Second, the *Tsaddik* R. Yisrael 'the Child' of Stolin, who died on the second day of *Rosh Hashanah* 1921. She perished in the Holocaust in Stolin on 29th *Elul* 1942.

This letter is R. Aharon the Second's reply to the invitation from his daughter, Miryam, and his son-in-law, R. Avraham-Yaakov of Sadagora, to the wedding of their daughter Sarah-Rivkah, who was mentioned in the first letter. She was, as already noted, the first wife of the *Tsaddik* R. Yisrael of Mezhibozh. This letter gives some idea of the conditions of travelling in those days. The letter bears no date. But in the third letter (below), which was written on Thursday,

הוא שלם וקל למה כמל טוב שיתן טוב כמים ובתורה ואשרת שלום ואברהם אבינו
אמר ונפשי חפצה אלהי יבורך ויהיה נאליהם ושלום יהיה עליך ויהי חתך חסדך
במקדשך אלהי יבורך ויהיה נאליהם ושלום יהיה עליך ויהי חתך חסדך

[illegible][illegible][illegible]

Letter from R. Aharon the Second to his daughter Miryam and to his son-in-law R. Avraham-Yaakov of
Sadagora. 29.7.1866

‘With God’s help, on the fifth day of the week ... [17th] Av ... [29th July 1866], here in the Holy Congregation of Stolin ... To my dearly loved son-in-law ... the renowned hasid, our Teacher and Master, Avraham-Yaakov ... and to his wife, my daughter ... Miryam ... and to their sons, my dear grandchildren ... their dear daughter ... Hadassah Feige ... and to her husband ... our Teacher and Master, Aviezer-Zelig ... and to their daughter Nehamah Gittel ... and their son, Hayyim Meir Yehiel ... and to their son, my grandchild ... our Teacher and Mas-

Thank God, we are alive and well, your mother and I... I have received letters from my dear son and (praise be to His Name) he is alive and well... and also my granddaughter... Hannah... and her husband... the son of the holy man, our Teacher and Master Mordekhai. Also from my dear daughter... Tsipporah Feige... and from her husband... our Teacher and Master, David... I have received letters and (praise be to His Name) they and their

children, my dear grandchildren . . . are alive and well. May it be granted us to receive only good news from you and to send you only good news. Thanks and praise to His Blessed Name for His goodness and favour to us in keeping us alive and preserving us until this time of the marriage of their child, my granddaughter, the bride Sarah Rivkah . . . to her young man, the excellent bridegroom . . . Yisrael Shalom Yosef . . . You may be sure that it was my fervent wish and desire to travel to you and rejoice with you, as always; and I have already informed you, in my letter of last week, that I set out on the journey, but then returned to my home . . . for the reason given there—that there was not sufficient time, so close to the Holy Days, for me, with my [limited] strength, to go there and back, and because of the heavy rains. Therefore I am specially sending my dear and excellent friend, the hasid, our Teacher and Master, Yomtov Simhah . . . the bearer of this letter, to you . . . and I have instructed him to speak my blessings for me . . . And this is my marriage blessing. May the marriage of your daughter, the bride . . . to her dear bridegroom . . . take place at a good and fortunate hour, may their union prosper, and may they be blessed . . . with a generation of upright and righteous offspring . . . with many long years of life and peace, with all the blessings uttered by . . . our holy forefathers . . . I hope for the gracious favours of the Blessed Name . . . and His many mercies, that He should grant us good fortune, together with all our Jewish brethren, and long life . . . that we may all . . . rejoice in the sons and daughters and grandchildren that you have and that will be born to you, for length of days and great happiness. I pray you, my beloved children . . . to rejoice as if I were in your midst, and my blessing . . . will come to you from here . . . When you write to me truly that you are happy, you will literally revive my soul . . . The rest of my blessings and good wishes will be delivered by my friend, the above-mentioned bearer of this letter. And now my loved ones, my children and my granddaughter, the dear bride, and her dear groom . . . gladly accept the gifts that I am sending—from myself and from my household . . . a pair of large candlesticks, and from our followers [sc. the hasidim] a pair of smaller candlesticks and a fine wire-thread basket. May you have light and joy, when you use them on Sabbaths and Holy Days. And may you, my beloved children . . . and grandchildren . . . and their husbands and grandchildren . . . be granted every good and bles-

sing and deliverance by the Lord of Peace . . . With every good wish . . . from me, your ever-loving father who prays for your . . . well-being, Aharon the son of our Teacher and Master Asher (the righteous man of blessed memory).

The letter of our dear daughter . . . written on the fifth day . . . arrived safely and gave us great gratification.

After writing the above letter, we were happy to receive your telegram sent on the third day of last week, 19th Av. As regards my consent to the postponing of the *huppah* by several days, in the month of *Elul*, I can tell you that such was my wish from the start. And that was one of the things that I instructed our friend, the bearer of this letter, to tell you [when he brings you] . . . our congratulations and good wishes.

Enclosed herewith is a letter from your mother . . . and my granddaughter and my son's son-in-law.'

The following descendants of R. Aharon the Second of Karlin, in addition to those mentioned in the two previous letters, are referred to in this third letter: *Nehamah Gittl*, the daughter of Hadassah-Feige and R. Avi-Ezri-Zelig Shapira of Drohobich. She was the wife of the *Tsaddik* R. Yisrael of Husyatin, who, as already noted, was the son of R. Mordekhai-Sheraga of Husyatin, the son of R. Yisrael of Ruzhin. After the First World War, R. Yisrael of Husyatin made his *aliyah* to *Erets Yisrael*, where he died in 1948. R. *Hayyim-Meir-Yehiel*, their son, who is mentioned in this letter, was, like his father, the Rebbe of Drohobich. He died in 1924.

R. *Shelomo*, the grandson of R. Aharon the Second, mentioned in this letter, married *Rahel-Leah*, the daughter of the *Tsaddik*, R' Tsevi Meshareth of Rymanov, and later *Feige*, the daughter of R. David of Berdichev. In the tragic affair of the son of R. Yisrael of Ruzhin, R. Dov-Baer of Leovo, who became a free-thinking *maskil*, the hasidim of Sadagora accused R. Shelomo of allocating, by his own decision and against the judgment of his father, R. Avraham-Yaakov, a burial place for R. Dov, who was his uncle, in a separate corner of the *ohel* [burial plot] of the head of the family, R. Yisrael of Ruzhin, and not next to the latter's grave. The Sadagora hasidim used to say that R. Shelomo died the same year as punishment for this act.

R. *Yitshak*, the son of Miryam and R. Avraham-Yaakov, was, as already stated, the founder of the

Boyan dynasty, one of the important and influential branches of the Ruzhin family. His wife, *Malkah*, was the daughter of the *Tsaddik* R. Yohanan of Rahmis-trivka, the son of the *Maggid* R. Mordekhai of Cherenobyl. R. Yitshak died in 1917.

His brother, R. *Yisrael*, who is also mentioned in the letter, succeeded his father, R. Avraham-Yaakov, as *Tsaddik* in Sadagora and was the leader of the Sadagora hasidim till his death in 1906. His first wife was the daughter of his cousin, R. Yitshak of Buhush, the son of R. Shalom-Yosef, his father's brother.

The *Ruhamah Bathsheva* mentioned in the letter was the wife of her cousin, R. *Yisrael of Chortkov*, the son of the well-known *Tsaddik*, R. David-Moshe of Chortkov, who, like R. Avraham-Yaakov, was also a son of R. *Yisrael of Ruzhin*. R. *Yisrael of Chortkov* died in 1933.

This letter was written—as stated at the head of the letter—on 17th Av [July 29th] 1866.

The hasidim of R. Avraham-Yaakov of Sadagora, the successor of R. *Yisrael of Ruzhin* in Sadagora, were followers of his two sons: R. Yitshak of Boyan and R. *Yisrael of Sadagora*, both of them the grandsons of R. Aharon the Second of Karlin.

These genealogical details prove that, among the descendants of R. Aharon the Second of Karlin mentioned in these three letters, there was not a single one that formed a marriage alliance with someone who was not “the son or daughter of holy men”, i.e., was not also from a family of *Tsaddikim*. This was in keeping with the well-known practice prevailing in the families of the *Tsaddikim* of inter-marrying to preserve their distinguished lineage. This tradition—as is also shown by the genealogical details contained in these letters—resulted in marriages between close relatives, e.g. between cousins and the like, such as are genetically undesirable.

The close bonds of friendship established between the Karlin and Kozhenits dynasties in the time of R. Asher the First were maintained in R. Aharon the Second's day, too. This is evident from the following letter found in the Stolin *genizah*—undated in the original—from R. Aharon the Second to the Kozhenits hasidim:

‘Warm greetings to the beloved of the Lord... who frequent... the threshold... and his descendants...’

‘Were I to try to relate in detail... the love... that my Father and Teacher implanted deep in my

heart... there would not be space enough, for he never ceased praising [R. *Yisrael*]. Thanks be to God... that after him [R. *Yisrael of Kozhenits*] there came forth a scion of his stock... a delightful child, whom... I raised and brought up at my table [i.e., in my house]... a clever and knowledgeable boy... filled with the spirit of wisdom... who... has now reached the age of marriage... Therefore, let my friends... who have followed in their holy path [i.e., that of the Kozhenits *Tsaddikim*] from generation to generation, let them awake and rouse themselves, and let them help one another to contribute gold from their pockets generously, according to their means and beyond their means... For... the delightful boy is a fine person... and with God's help everyone will find his own satisfaction in him. I trust that the leaders of the generation, too... will hasten to fulfil my wishes... to awaken the hearts of those that follow them [i.e., their hasidim] and to raise as much money as possible. May the merits of their holy forefathers aid them and assist them... in all their affairs with success and blessing... in all that they do and in all that their hearts desire... These are the words of their loved one who prays for their welfare and good....’

Aharon the son of R. Asher...’

‘...A delightful child whom... I raised and brought up at my table... who... has now reached the age of marriage’ for whose marriage R. Aharon the Second requests the hasidim of Kozhenits ‘to contribute gold from their pockets generously, according to their means and beyond their means,’ was one of the descendants of R. *Yisrael of Kozhenits*, R. Yerahmiel-Moshe. This R. Yerahmiel-Moshe was educated in Stolin, in the house of his step-father, R. Asher the Second, and subsequently became the *Tsaddik* of Kozhenits.

In R. Aharon the Second's days, the influence of the *Haskalah* [‘Enlightenment’] in Western Europe, began to penetrate into Lithuania, bringing with it liberal social ideas. Hasidism now faced a new challenge. It now came under attack from the *maskilim*, just as a hundred years previously it had been attacked by the *Rabbanim*, and it displayed the same stubborn power of resistance in meeting this second onslaught as it had in meeting the first. Eventually, this conflict did great damage to Karlin hasidism and led to its decline, but not until after the death of R. Aharon the Second.

The teachings of R. Aharon the Second included in *Beth Aharon* are described as follows in the introduction to that volume: 'Excellent sermons... what was uttered explicitly... by the lips... of R. Aharon [the Second]... faithfully recorded true words, one out of a thousand of his holy sayings... The writings of our Master and Teacher of blessed memory [R. Aharon the Second]... were collected together and annotated in his own hand, various annotations on various subjects. Whenever he referred to these holy writings, he called them *Beth Aharon*... Also, we have seen fit to include other excellent matters which we found written down in the hand of our Teacher's followers, who wrote them down for themselves as a record of his holy words that they heard from his holy mouth at various times when they were in his holy residence.'¹⁵¹ In the volume *Beth Aharon*, which was published three years after R. Aharon the Second's death, we find many such expressions as the following: 'He began to speak,' 'the Rebbe said,' 'the Rebbe spoke a great deal about this,' 'the Rebbe raised a question,' 'the Rebbe repeated,' 'he reported his Father as saying,' 'he related on the authority of the holy Rebbe, R. Shelomo Karliner,' 'afterwards he spoke a great deal himself and said,' 'he ended with a blessing,' 'he was asked,' 'he said in the name of the holy Rebbe from Mezhibozh [R. Barukh],' 'the holy Rebbe of blessed memory asked a difficult question,' 'in the year 1872, on the holy Sabbath, Portion of the Law *Be-Haalothecha*, before he was laid to rest... he said.' These repeatedly stressed expressions confirm that most of the contents of the book were indeed written 'by his followers... who wrote them down for themselves... that they heard from his mouth.'

On the other hand, we also find such expressions as the following: 'As I heard from my revered father,' 'in my youth I asked my revered father,' 'according to the parable related to my revered grandfather, the holy *Tsaddik* [R. Aharon the Great] of Karlin,' 'as I

heard in the name of the *Tsaddik*, our Teacher and Master, R. Sh.[elomo] of Karlin,' 'I have heard it said in the name of our Teacher and Master R. M.[ordekhai] of blessed memory from Neshkizh,' 'we spoke,' 'we said,' and the like. These expressions are evidence that some of 'the holy writings... were... annotated in his holy hand.' In his sermons, R. Aharon the Second frequently quotes from his father and also from R. Shelomo of Karlin, whom he refers to as 'the holy *Tsaddik* of Karlin.' He also mentions his grandfather, R. Aharon the Great, whom he calls 'R. Aharon Karliner.' He likewise quotes from the homilies and parables of other *Tsaddikim*, such as R. Barukh [of Mezhibozh], R. Elimelekh [of Lizhensk], the *Tsaddik* of Kozhenits [R. Yisrael], the *Tsaddik* of Polonnoye [R. Yaakov-Yosef], R. Yisrael of Ruzhin, R. Nahum of Chernobyl, R. Levi-Yitshak of Berdichev, R. Mordekhai of Neshkizh, the Rebbe of Lublin [R. Yaakov-Yitshak], R. Zusya of Anipol, R. Mendel of Bar, The Rebbe of Apta [the *Tsaddik* R. Avraham-Yehoshua-Heshel: 'as I heard from the *Tsaddik* of Apta']. Another source used by R. Aharon is 'the *siddur* [prayer-book] of R. Yaakov-Koppel.' Sometimes he attributes the same idea both to his father and to R. Shelomo of Karlin; and certain ideas which he attributes to his father are the same as those attributed by the hasidim, in their 'Collected Sayings,' to R. Asher the First. In R. Aharon's sermons, there is not much casuistry. Instead, there are many explanations and parables, sometimes even in Yiddish, which made the book more accessible to the simple uneducated hasid. From references in the text, it is clear that these hasidic homilies were delivered over a period of many years, from 1841 to 'the holy Sabbath... before he was laid to rest' (1872).

On the way in which a Jew should pray, R. Aharon speaks as follows: 'In worshipping... the Almighty, one should not keep on repeating the same prayer mechanically, but should add and add again. Every prayer must have fresh vitality infused into it.' 'The uniting of the worlds is achieved primarily by prayer.' 'Even the man of least worth is not permitted to despair... "For is not my word like fire?" Just as fire lights up the darkness, so will the Holy Name give him light... in all his trials.' 'Everyone must take care to bring himself closer to the Source of Life when he prays, and, of course, when he studies and when he performs any of the commandments.' 'Every word that a man utters should bring him closer to the

¹⁵¹ From the 'talk' of the Karlin hasidim: Once, after a session at the 'table,' R. Aharon the Second saw one of his followers pick up a page of notes that he had dropped. On being informed, in answer to his question, that this particular hasid was in the habit of writing down his 'words on the *Torah*,' so that they could be published in a book, R. Aharon asked him: 'Are you making sure that my hasidim have a good soporific?' Similar stories are told of R. Mendel of Kotsk.

Source of Life.' One should stand up to pray only in a joyful frame of mind. 'Whenever a prayer is uttered something is born... And when is something born?... When the prayer is uttered joyfully. But prayer uttered (Heaven forbid!) in sadness bears no fruit. When God has aroused a man's spirit and soul to pray joyfully, then he exalts all the previous prayers.' 'Every word spoken by man in the presence of the Almighty Blessed Be He, must be spoken clearly, vigorously, and joyfully... This is the meaning of "Thou shalt make a window for the ark" [Heb.: *tevah*]¹—that you should bring light to the written letter' [Heb.: *tevah*]. Not only when praying should a man be happy, but whatever he does should be done joyfully, for 'by joyfulness he will be able to remove himself from everything evil and to bring himself closer to the good.' 'One must beware of sadness and melancholy, as of all the other sins and vices.' 'The essential thing is to perform every commandment joyfully, not sadly.' The consonants of the Hebrew word for 'thought' [*mahashavah*] form the word for 'joyfully' [*besimhah*]; hence 'repentance... comes primarily from joyfulness and delight; and delight and joyfulness come primarily from repentance.'

Apart from prayer, there is still another way that brings the Jew closer to his God—the way of *Torah* (the study of the Law). 'Not only in prayer, but also in our study of the Law, we must continually, every day, find fresh, renewed vitality. "Give us our portion in Thy Law"... this means: give every single one of us the share in the Law that is his... One man finds spiritual vigour in the study of a single verse, another in the *Gemara*, a third in the *Zohar*. Each one must seek for and find his own spiritual vigour and sanctity in the *Torah*.' At the same time, R. Aharon stresses the part played by the ordinary Jew in creating this sanctity: 'The People of Israel... bring holiness to everything... Here is the proof: a Scroll of the Law written by a heretic is unfit for use... even though the letters are exactly the same as those written by a Jew. For the truth is that what matters is the sanctity, drawn from the living power of the Creator, that the Jew infuses into the letters.' R. Aharon is reported to have summed up the relationship between the study of the Law and prayer in the following dictum: The study of the Law is an obligation, prayer a need.

Not only prayer and the study of the Law, but every act that a man performs is a form of Divine

worship. 'Not only in the study of the *Torah* and in prayer, but also in things that a man does of his own free will, such as eating, drinking, sleeping, walking, sexual intercourse, and the like, and in all other human activities, everyone must take care not to remove himself (Heaven forbid!) from the Almighty, Blessed Be He, but only to bring himself closer thereby to His Holy Name.

'Whenever a man does good deeds he is sowing a seed in Heaven that will bear fruit... If a man does not sow the seed, he will not reap the harvest. Hence, in spiritual matters a man is obliged to sow *mitsvoth* and good deeds, and thus bring it about that the Holy Name should shower down upon him His great light and every spiritual and physical blessing in this world, and that there should be complete communion... The flesh is purified until it becomes all spirit.'

Prayer, study, and good deeds were given to man for one purpose only—to enable him to attain to the living power of the Creator. 'Everything that is done in the world... contains within it the living power of the Creator,' 'and when all creatures are exalted spiritually by us, our righteous Messiah will come.' 'When a Jew is born, he is born with his good portion, with all the faculties required for him to be equipped to receive his good portion. And what is this portion? "For the Lord's portion is His people"—the living power of the Divinity... the vital force which He implanted in His people Israel, was all taken from on high, that is, from His Holiness, Blessed Be His Name! For, as is known, man is a portion of the Most High.' 'Every Jew can attain to the living power of the Holy Name. Even the smallest of all, and the least of all, and the lowest of all.' What, then, prevents them? 'When a man knows that he is nothing and that there is nothing in him, then, whenever he wishes it, the living force of the Creator can pervade his whole being... But when he thinks himself something, then there is no room for the living power of the Creator to spread in him.'

The purpose for which everything was created is the attainment of perfection, and 'we, the people of Israel, were created for the complete perfection that is to be attained... speedily in our days. The world shall be purified and restored to perfection; all things shall be one, and there shall be peace in the world.' 'Everyone must know that the whole universe and every human being are like a lamp and vessel that

receive the living power and light of the Holy One Blessed Be He.' But 'the light of the Holy One Blessed Be He cannot go together with anything physical in this lower world of ours. Hence, His intention . . . in creating this world was to make the two worlds one, that man should be freed from his physical trammels and everything should be raised up to His will . . . but then came the sins of the generation of the Flood and the generation of the Tower of Babel and the men of Sodom. There followed two thousand years of chaos, when the Divine Presence withdrew to the Seventh Heaven and this lower world was separated from the higher world and the Divine Providence almost abandoned man . . . But afterwards, when the two thousand years of *Torah* commenced and God's light began to shine in this world, when the patriarchs together with all the righteous ones and Moses our Teacher brought back the Divine Glory to earth, and everything was purified and raised up to the Holy One Blessed Be He—then the two worlds were made equal. For this is the essence of His will . . . that every physical thing in this world should be elevated to the spiritual level.' 'For, in truth, the spiritual is far removed from the physical, and the physical is far removed from the spiritual. Only when Israel cleave to the Holy One Blessed Be He by keeping His Law and worshipping Him and obliterating themselves, only then do they bring His Holiness and light down to this world and only then can they ascend to the higher sphere . . . in body.' 'For the worlds were created solely for the purpose that each of them should be filled with the light of the Holy One Blessed Be He and be constantly renewed. Thereby is this world kept in being.'

R. Aharon attributes to the *Tsaddik* the exalted role of radiating some of the 'hidden light' on the world. 'The first light that was hidden away, was sealed up in the *Tsaddikim* . . . not for the world to come, but for the *Tsaddikim* that were to arise in every generation, that they should attain to the light by their good deeds.' 'By their actions, the *Tsaddikim* raise up all things to the heights, where they become a torch . . . a great light for all this world.' 'All the *Tsaddikim* attained to the hidden light by their spiritual self-sacrifice . . . until they became men of great righteousness.' 'It would seem natural to wonder (since the Lord hid the light away), Why did He create it at all? . . . So that afterwards every man should search for the hidden light.' To this end, every-one must bind himself in his prayers to the *Tsad-*

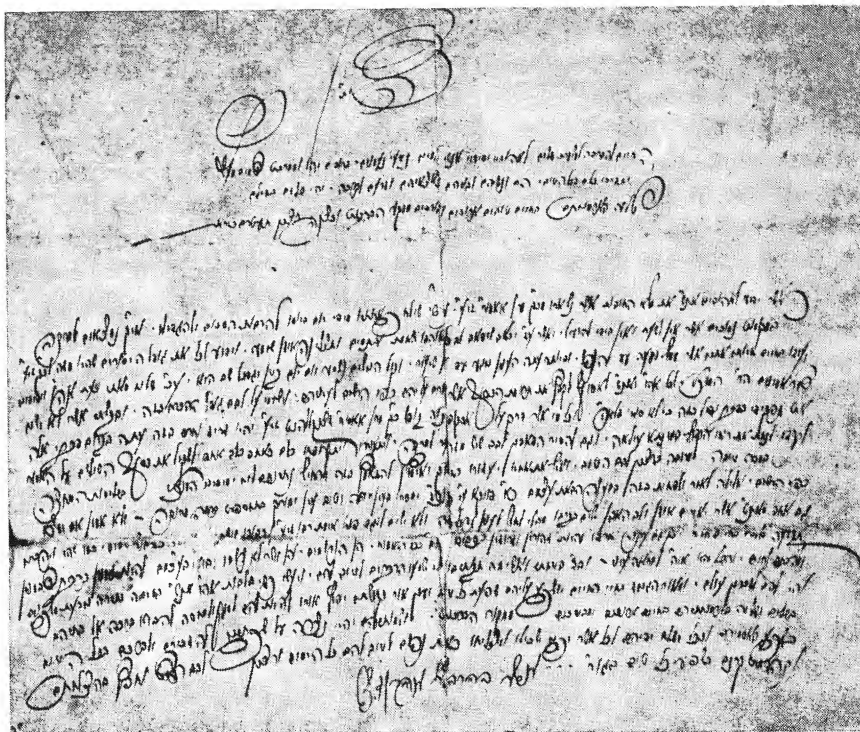
dikim, who are bound to the holy patriarchs.'

Prayer, study, and good deeds hasten the day of redemption. 'Every day, nay every hour, a man must bring the world nearer to the coming of the Messiah: as we have already said on the verse "All the days of your life"—this includes [lit.: brings in] the days of the Messiah, so that everyone must . . . by his deeds bring the world nearer to the coming of the Messiah: Moreover, 'every Jew is also in himself a kind of Messiah,' for 'every Jew is obliged to think and know that he is unique in the world, and that no other person like him has yet existed in the world. For if there had already been anyone like him in this world, there would have been no need for him to exist . . . Every single person is something new in the world and must in this world perfect his character . . . and his Jewish knowledge which are an integral part of his being, until all the worlds shall be perfected by the whole community of Israel, and . . . the righteous redeemer shall come.'

R. Aharon the Second used to say: Truth, even the slightest trace of truth, is impossible without spiritual devotion. And 'R. Yisrael of Ruzhin once said: "R. Aharon the Great of Karlin was the truth of the world; R. Asher, his son, walked all his life in the footsteps of the truth; and as for R. Aharon, his grandson, if he knew that a crumb of truth was hidden under the floor, he would pull up the floor with his fingers."'



Title-page of the Volume "Beth Aharon"
Brody 1875



Letter of R. Asher the Second to his followers
1872 or 1873

R. Aharon the Second remained all the rest of his life in Stolin. He died on the 17th *Sivan*, 1872,¹⁵² while passing through the small town of Mlynov, near Dubno, in Volhynia, and was buried there. Thereafter, he was given by his followers the additional names of 'the man of Mlynov' or 'the holy grandfather.' Since the teachings of R. Aharon the Second comprise the major part of the volume *Beth Aharon*, he himself is often referred to by the hasidim by the name of this book, according to the Jewish practice of naming writers after their works.¹⁵³

¹⁵² *Beth Aharon*, p. 6.

¹⁵³ As has already been remarked, the exact authorship of each of the sections of *Beth Aharon* is uncertain. In *Mishnath Hakhamim* by R. Avraham-Elimelekh Shapiro (Jerusalem 1934), there is a collection of 'Words of our Rabbis' from the ms. of the Karlin *Tsaddikim*. In the introduction to this volume we read: 'I received the ms. as a gift... from my revered father-in-law... our Teacher and Rabbi, R. Yerahmiel-Moshe... of Kozhenits, who grew up and was educated in Stolin in the household... of R. Aharon... the author of *Beth Aharon*... In the ms. it is written that most of the articles are... by our Teacher R. Aharon the Great... and also some by... our Teacher, R. Aha-

G. *Ha-Yenuka* [The Child] (1873—1921)

R. Aharon the Second's successor was his son, R. Asher the Second. The situation then prevailing in the 'court' at Stolin may be gathered from a letter, signed

ron [the Second]... the author of *Beth Aharon*... But there is no indication which these "some" are.' R. Shapiro's book comprises explanatory comments on Biblical verses and rabbinical sayings, together with hasidic material similar in content and spirit to that found in *Beth Aharon*. At the end of the book, the author prints a story about R. Aharon the Great from the time when he was living in the house of his Teacher in Mezerich, together with two letters from R. Aharon the Second to his followers in Palestine, and chronological details with an important bearing on the history of the Karlin *Tsaddikim*.

Yeshayahu Tishby published the satirical anti-hasidic work of Tsevi Herman Shapira, *Massekheh Hasidim—Tract on the Hasidim* ('Tsevi Herman Shapira—*ke-Sofer ha-Haskalah*', *Molad*, Vol. IV, No. 23, pp. 556—579 and No. 24, pp. 696—712, Tel Aviv 1972.) After thorough analysis and discussion, Tishby expresses the opinion that R. Aharon the Second of Karlin served as Shapira's model of *Tsaddik* as portrayed in the 'tract', and that many qualities attributed by Shapira to the *Tsaddik* were those of R. Aharon.

by R. Asher the Second and written in the hand of one of his followers, which was sent by R. Asher to his hasidim after his father's death.

'With the help of the Blessed Name!

'Life and blessing... to my beloved ones... our loyal followers... May they be blessed... with every good, they and their wives and their children and descendants... with a good and long life... Our beloved followers know the painful burden of debts left... by our Master, my revered Father... and they all know how great were [my father's] sufferings on this account in his lifetime... how he was pained to the very depths of his being... and how the voice of the creditors was heard every day... Now, therefore, I am sending our dearly beloved friend... the bearer of this letter, to all... our followers to collect their contributions... according to the list that he shows them. Let them take good note of the greatness of the need. Moreover, I request that my office in such a great matter as this should not be changed... and everyone that trod the threshold of the holy residence of... my Father... should be quick to carry out these my words, to honour him and to give his holy spirit rest in Paradise; and also to remove the great sorrow that is caused by this. Let them all rise up as one man to pay the sum required... generously and gladly. Let them help... and encourage one another to pay their contribution speedily to our friend, the bearer of this letter... according to the list. Heaven forbid that they should be late, or should put off... their response, but let them bring it themselves. Let them contribute through the bearer of this letter, and let them give generously. For he that gives generously will receive an additional blessing. It is not to be believed that there will be even one of our followers that will shut his ears... and not feel bound to perform this great duty, nor remember his reverence for his Teacher... Even as the love of him was deeply implanted in their hearts in his lifetime so now it is their bounden duty to be quick in showing respect for his memory... Everything will be... under my supervision... I trust... that they will hearken to my words for their own good... and that the Hidden Light may pour down every blessing upon them... to bring blessing upon their houses in peace... and in long life... and that their names may be constantly mentioned on our lips... Wherever they turn may they prosper... that all may be well with them always...'

In his practical interpretation of hasidic doctrine R. Asher the Second occupies a special place among the Karlin *Tsaddikim*. He was very greatly influenced by mystical doctrines and laid greater stress than his predecessors on the importance of immersion in the *mikveh* [the ritual bath] which 'washes away the uncleanness of the body and instead infuses it with holiness.' There are many reports of how he would remain immersed in the *mikveh* for hours on end, to the uncomprehending astonishment of the local mithnaged population. The few passages of biblical exposition attributed to him in *Beth Aharon* all deal with 'purification by immersion in the *mikveh*.' In the 'Rules for Daily Conduct' quoted in his name in the same volume, R. Asher bases the whole order of the day's work on the one principle of joyful 'inner worship,' as against 'sadness and grief (Heaven forbid!),' on religious awe, love, and humility, which 'purifies and perfects all the human qualities.' Again, 'attachment to the *Tsaddikim* is very efficacious, to prevent any error in soul-searching'; and 'levity is the exact opposite of hasidism.'¹⁵⁴

R. Asher the Second's period of 'leadership' as the Stolin Rebbe was of short duration. He died only a year after R. Aharon the Second, on the 15th Av, 1873, in the small town of Drohobich (Galicia), and was buried there. Hence the additional names given him by the Karlin hasidim: 'the man of Drohobich,' or 'the young Rebbe,' to distinguish him from 'the old man of Stolin,' R. Asher the First, and from 'the holy grandfather,' R. Aharon the Second.¹⁵⁵

The death of R. Asher the Second caused a crisis in the ranks of Karlin hasidism, since he left no adult successor. His only son, Yisrael, was then about four years old (hasidic tradition has it that he was born on 10th *Kislev*, 1868), and thus not only the child, but all the Karlin hasidim, too, lost a father. In this critical time, the Karlin hasidim resolved to meet the danger by standing firm in their loyalty to

¹⁵⁴ *Beth Aharon*, Brody 1875. R. Asher the Second is the author of the following material printed in this volume: 'Daily Conduct' (p. 10), and 'Sayings' quoted in his name (pp. 161, 198, 289, 314).

In *Divrei Aharon* (pp. 81-88), Hausman published several letters from and to R. Asher the Second in which there are some historical details. See also the same author in his book *Birkath Aharon*, pp. 129-136.

¹⁵⁵ In order to perpetuate the names of their *Tsaddikim*, the Karlin hasidim used to call their children 'Aharon' or 'Asher.'

the Karlin dynasty, and therefore proclaimed the *Yenuka* [Child] Yisrael to be their Rebbe. This proclamation of a small child as a Rebbe aroused comment in the Jewish press, particularly in a satirical article entitled *Hithgalluth ha-Yenuka bi-Stolin* [The Revelation of the Child in Stolin].¹⁵⁶ This satire is presented in the form of a long letter, written supposedly by a hasid in the characteristic hasidic style, in which the writer goes into ecstasies about the 'miracles' and 'marvels' of the Karlin *Tsaddikim*, including those performed by the *Yenuka*.

When R. Yisrael grew up, he not only made a name for himself by his intellectual ability and practical vigour, but he also won the deep affection of his followers by the warm paternal interest that he took in every one of them. They loved him for the impartial way in which he used to preach and reprimand as he thought necessary, without making any distinction between rich and poor, between someone from a good family and a simple Jew. His sense of realities and his experience in worldly affairs enabled him to help his followers with good advice in time of trouble. R. Yisrael was also very tolerant and mixed freely with people from all strata of the population, thus winning the respect even of his opponents. With his knowledge of Russian and German he had close connections with the secular authorities, and used to intercede with them on behalf both of the whole community and of its individual members. The hasidim relate that once, when a troop of soldiers descended upon Stolin with the intention of carrying out a pogrom, R. Yisrael invited the commander to a meal; and when the latter told him that he had not come to Stolin to eat but for 'other matters,' and asked R. Yisrael who his children were since he did not wish to harm them, R. Yisrael replied: 'All the Jews of Stolin are my children.' The story ends with the words: 'So there was no pogrom in Stolin.'¹⁵⁷

True to the tradition of his father and grandfather before him, R. Yisrael held open 'court' in Stolin for the Karlin hasidim, especially on Sabbaths and Festivals. R. Yisrael was not in the habit of expounding

the *Torah*, and yet on the Penitential Days Stolin—so eye-witnesses relate—was crowded with hasidim who would come from far and near, from Kiev and Warsaw and from as far away as Odessa, and a few even from Palestine. On *Simhath Torah* and on the *Seder* Night of Passover, the tunes of R. Aharon the Second, sung with joyful fervour, would resound through the small town till late into the night. Unlike the other Karlin hasidim, R. Yisrael used himself to pray silently. However, he conducted the *melavveh malkah* to musical accompaniment. He and his three sons together made up a quartet which occasionally performed various pieces of secular music, in addition to liturgical tunes. For R. Yisrael, playing music was one of the forms of Divine worship, which was therefore 'to be preceded by washing the hands.'¹⁵⁸

The influence of the *Haskalah* movement, which had first begun to be felt in R. Aharon the Second's



Picture of R. Yisrael 'The Child' of Stolin

¹⁵⁶ Had min Havraya, '*Hithgalluth ha-Yenuka bi-Stolin*,' *Ha-Shahar*, Vol. VI, pp. 25-44. The author of this satire was the writer and *maskil* Yahalal [Yehudah-Leib Levin], as he himself states in his book *Zikaron ba-Sefer*, p. 45, Zhitomir, 1910.

¹⁵⁷ A. Ben-Ezra, *Ha-'Yenuka' mi-Stolin*, p. 16, New York 1951.

¹⁵⁸ Ben-Ezra, *op. cit.*, p. 11. R. Yisrael kept composers of songs in his 'court.' The best known of these was R. Yaakov of Telekhan (a small town close to Pinsk), whose melodies attained such popularity in hasidic circles that they were sung for two generations by the hasidim of Karlin, Lakhovich, and Koidanov. The next best-known composer of Karlin melodies was R. Yossele Talner. A second edition of *Beth Aharon* was published in R. Yisrael's time (Petrokov 1914). It is identical with the first edition (Brody 1875).

days, grew stronger in R. Yisrael's time. The nationalist and socialist movements at the turn of the century, together with the secularisation of Jewish education, alienated the younger generation of Jews from hasidism. Indeed, R. Yisrael's own followers used to relate that he himself spoke sadly of Karlin hasidism as a phase that was drawing to a close.

R. Yisrael set down some of the main points of his 'credo' in two testaments, one addressed to his family and the other to his followers.¹⁵⁹

In the testament to his family R. Yisrael writes as follows:

'When my spirit departs, no time shall be spent on ceremonial tributes of respect. If my end comes while I am travelling, my body shall not be carried to my home, unless the place be only a few hours' distance from Mlynov [the burial place of R. Aharon the Second], Karlin [the burial place of R. Aharon the Great and R. Asher the First], or Drohobich [the burial place of R. Asher the Second]. If it be the local custom to set up an *ohel* [structure over the grave], mine shall not be a large one but only medium-sized. If it be the custom to set up a tombstone, only my name and my father's name shall be inscribed on it, without any titles... [For winding-sheet] they shall take my *kittel* [a white garment worn by Jews on the Penitential Days and on the *Seder* Night], and the other ceremonies shall be made from the garments of my fathers... In the first year, in all the towns where there are followers of mine, they shall study *Ein Yaakov* [a volume containing the talmudic *Aggadah*], and if there is a *Talmud* study circle, they shall complete one tractate in my memory. And in the circles in which I am registered as a member, care shall be taken to divide up the *Talmud* in such a way that in the course of ten years the whole *Talmud* shall have been studied in my memory.

'I herewith earnestly request my sons to do their utmost to educate their own sons (and to use all their influence with others, too) in traditional Judaism and hasidism after the old manner without any compromises. The main thing is the study of the *Talmud*...

which makes all that know it conduct themselves better. When the children grow up, let them be taught writing and language, things that are naturally necessary, and let them not be like the fools of the present day whose whole education is derived from journals and stories. Their parents shall take care that their teacher be an elderly man of known probity. They shall also give good heed to the education of their daughters, for on that depends the corner-stone of Judaism—the family; and they shall endeavour to find them husbands soon after they reach marriageable age.

'I counsel my sons not to meddle in communal affairs or in any worldly matters, especially not in money cases or matters concerning the secular authorities. For in the course of my long life I have never seen anyone that emerged from all this unscathed and unhumiliated, except in such matters as the study of the *Talmud* and the use of the *mikveh*. The greatest principle of all is not to flatter anyone in the world, for this sometimes leads to the opposite result, as our Sages remarked: "Every flatterer eventually falls into the power of the one whom he flatters." Hence, this shall be the sign to my followers to which of my sons to turn [i.e., which of them to choose as my successor]: the one that shall admit no flatterers, show no special favour to any man, make no special effort to win followers, and not become involved with the secular authorities.'

Then follow the detailed instructions about the division of the property as a whole:

'My Scrolls of the Law shall be divided up between my sons, but the holy Scroll of my grandfather of blessed memory shall remain in Stolin as long as my *beth midrash* stands and those that worship in it pray in the hasidic manner. Afterwards they shall come to some agreement among themselves, according to the decision of pious Jews.'

'This will was written in the hand of our holy Rebbe, in the presence of the undersigned... on the second day of the week, the 2nd of *Teveth*, [5]681 [1920], in Stolin.'

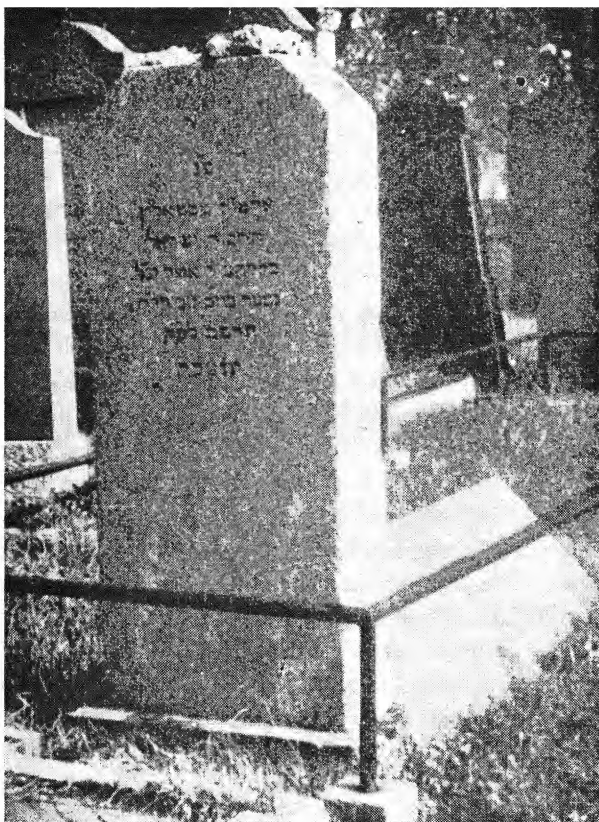
Signature of two witnesses.

The following is the text of R. Yisrael's last injunctions to his followers:

'... The second day of the week... the 12th of *Tammuz*, [5]681 [= 1921], Stolin.

'For the sake of my brethren and companions I shall utter... words that come from the heart to our loyal followers... that these words should be inscribed

¹⁵⁹ The text printed here is that of a copy of the two testaments which belonged to a Stolin hasid in Pinsk closely associated with R. Yisrael of Stolin. Both the testaments were published by Ben-Ezra, *op. cit.*, pp. 19–24. There are slight differences in the third edition of *Beth Aharon*, p. 314 (Brooklyn 1952), and also in the fourth edition, p. 315 (Jerusalem 1965).



The Grave of R. Yisrael 'The Child' of Stolin
in Frankfurt-on-Main

on the tablets of their heart... in the true hasidic manner... Let every single one of them be truthful and sincere; let him never speak hypocritically, but let his outward manner truly reflect his inner thoughts. Let him obey the injunction of the verse: "Know Him in all thy ways" [Prov. 3, 6]. Let every one of them guard his tongue from evil and his lips from uttering deceit, and let him utterly eschew lying and arrogance. As it is written: "The arrogant man is an abomination to the Lord" [Prov. 16, 5]... I pray that the Lord may graciously grant us length of days and years, with all good and pleasant things. True, the net is spread out over all living things; and since all men are mortal, I exhort our followers (may they live long!) that, in a hundred years from now, there should be no dissension between them arising from the sect of flatterers and hypocrites, for no flatterer shall come into the Lord's presence, but that they should all form one united band. This shall be a true sign for them: that one of my sons... in whom there shall be all these qualities, who shall not be a flatterer or hypo-

crite, and shall eschew lies, and shall not belong to... a company (here, between the lines, the following words have been added in his own holy hand: a company of the Zionists and especially of the *Mizrahi*),¹⁶⁰ but who shall be one of those that fear the Lord, who shall not have his sons and daughters taught in schools, not even in Hebrew schools, nor make any effort to have himself chosen Rebbe—he shall be their [sc. my followers'] leader and head. (From this point the testament is written in his own holy hand): When I could no longer see clearly enough to write in my own hand, I ordered my family to write at my dictation. In witness whereof I sign my name

Yisrael the son... of R. Asher...

Signature of two witnesses.

R. Yisrael died at the age of 52 on the second day of *Rosh Hashanah*, 1921, far away from his native town, in a convalescent home in Homburg, Germany. He was buried in Frankfurt-on-Main, and is therefore to this day referred to by the Karlin hasidim as 'the man of Frankfurt.'¹⁶¹ Amongst the hasidim at

¹⁶⁰ R. Yisrael's cool attitude to the Zionist movement is illustrated by the following story, which was told me by Dr. Moshe Lutski the curator of Hebrew mss. in the library of Columbia University, New York, originally from the small town of Kozhan-Horodok (not far from Pinsk). As a young man, Dr. Lutski asked R. Yisrael's advice about where he should go to study *Torah*. R. Yisrael replied: 'If you want to study hasidism, go to one of the Lubavich *yeshivah*; and if you want to go to a mithnaged *yeshivah*, go to the *yeshivah* of Hafets Hayyim in Radin. But if you go to Radin, don't stop in Lida' (a hint that he should not enter the well-known *yeshivah* of Rabbi Reines, the founder of the 'Mizrahi' party). As against this, amongst the 'holy writings' found in the Stolin *genizah* there were deeds of sale relating to houses bought by R. Israel in the Holy Land; and he also used to send a special emissary to collect funds for the 'Karlin *kolel*' in Palestine (Ben-Ezra, *op. cit.*, p. 24, n. 20).

¹⁶¹ The collection of letters of the Karlin *Tsaddikim* published by Hausman in his works *Divrei Aharon* (Jerusalem 1964) and *Birkath Aharon* (Jerusalem 1970), constitute a valuable supplement to the book of Karlin hasidism, *Beth Aharon* (v. supr., nn. 123, 141, 154, and infr., n. 172). Hausman's volume contains (pp. 89–124) thirty-six letters from the *Tsaddik* R. Yisrael and sayings attributed to him. This material reflects the close personal relations existing between R. Yisrael and his followers, as well as his concern for the welfare of the Karlin hasidim in Palestine—in Jerusalem, Safed, Haifa, and above all in Tiberias—and for the prayer-house of R. Mendel of Vitebsk, which

large, and even among the *mithnagdim*, he is known as 'the *Yenuka* of Stolin.'

H. *The Final Tragedy and the Present Situation* (1921—1974)

After the death of R. Yisrael of Stolin (*Rosh Hashanah*, 1921), the Karlin hasidim gathered together in Stolin. R. Yisrael had six sons. After considerable argument¹⁶² it was decided that one of them, R. Moshe, should remain as Rebbe in Stolin; a second son, R. Avraham-Elimelekh, should take up residence as Rebbe in Karlin; a third, R. Yohanan, should settle in Lutsk (Volhynia); while, a fourth, R. Yaakov, received a call from the Karlin hasidim who had emigrated to America. However, the association between hasid and Rebbe was not determined by place of residence, but—and this was characteristic of the hasidic movement—by the personal attachment of the individual hasid to the Rebbe, 'according to the deepest needs of his soul.' Hence, there were Karlin hasidim in Stolin, and Stolin hasidim in Karlin. In this way, Karlin hasidism lost some of its homogeneity and unity. Thus, for example, of the two hasidic houses of prayer in Pinsk, one belonged to the Stolin hasidim (the followers of R. Moshe), and the other to the Karlin hasidim (the followers of R. Elimelekh). The same phenomenon recurred much later—in the thirties of the present century—in Tel Aviv; while R.

the Karlin hasidim had purchased in the time of R. Aharon the Second (v. supr.). R. Yisrael's letters are thoroughly hasidic in spirit, with special stress being laid on the importance of the study of the *Talmud*. He opposed the establishment of a Jewish school of a different type from the traditional *heder*; and he writes with pride of the values of Judaism. He is also reported to have expressed his opposition to the Zionist movement.

To this large collection of letters Hausman has appended a painstakingly complete and almost legalistically precise list of Karlin hasidic customs (*Divrei Aharon*, pp. 210–240), and also a genealogical table of the Karlin *Tsaddikim* and the ramifications of their families (*op. cit.*, pp. 242–253), based on a critical study of the sources.

For details of the life of R. Yisrael of Stolin and a description of how he lives on in the memory and imagination of his followers and their descendants, see: Stolin, *Sefer Zikkaron*, ed. A. Avatihi and Y. Ben-Zakai, the section Hasidism, Tel Aviv 1952; and the pamphlet *Or Zarua*, by the same editors, Tel Aviv 1952.

¹⁶² Y. Benjamini, '*Hilluf Mishmaroth be-Hatsar ha-Rebbe*,' *Stolin, Sefer Zikkaron*, p. 176.

Yohanan in Lutsk and R. Yaakov in America used both names—Stolin and Karlin—of themselves. Another son of R. Yisrael's, R. Asher, lived in Stolin. A talented musician, his gifts won the acclaim of musical authorities, and he went to study at the conservatory in Berlin.

A special place among the sons of R. Yisrael was reserved for R. Aharon (R. Aharele). Despite the requests of many of the hasidim, R. Aharon refused to become a Rebbe. A completely unworldly man, he settled in Warsaw (where, too, there were Karlin hasidim) and lived a life of austerity, devoting himself to helping the sick, the poor and the wretched. His selflessness was known and admired not only in hasidic circles. He died a martyr's death in Warsaw during the Nazi Holocaust (apparently in 1942). The stories told of his martyrdom have a legendary ring which bears eloquent testimony to the nobility of his spirit and the loftiness and purity of his self-sacrificing saintliness. His character has also been commemorated in verse.¹⁶³

R. Moshe of Stolin, a qualified *Rav* and a man of general education, made a name for himself by his practical energy. He also showed sympathy for the idea of Jewish nationalism. He visited Palestine twice (in 1933 and 1937), and expressed himself in favour of the partition of the country between Jews and Arabs—the question of the moment then—in order to make the free immigration of Jews immediately (1938) possible.¹⁶⁴ He had a way with young people and concerned himself for their education, founding (in 1922) a *yeshivah* in Stolin. This was a new phenomenon in the history of Karlin hasidism. The *yeshivah* was called *Beth Yisrael* and the main subject taught was *Gemara*, the aim being to achieve a synthesis of Lithuanian talmudic scholarship with the spirit of Karlin hasidism. The *yeshivah* quickly became a centre of religious learning for the whole dis-

¹⁶³ S. Shalom, '*Dodi Reb Aharele*,' *Shirim*, p. 349, Tel Aviv 1949; H. Zeidman, '*R. Aharon Perlov be-Geto Varshah*,' *Stolin, Sefer Zikkaron*, p. 209; Y. Ben Zakai, '*Ha-Kether she-Nuppats*,' *Or Zarua*, ed. A. Avatihi and Y. Ben-Zakai, p. 45; Dr. S. Shazakh, '*Simhath R. Aharele*,' in *Hatsofeh* (daily paper), Tel Aviv, 14.10.1951; Y. Feingold, '*Gulgulo shel Niggun*' in *Davar* (daily paper), Tel Aviv, 28.12.1945—the writer gives the date of R. Aharon's death: 25.7.1942. M. Unger, *Ha-Admorim she-Nispu ba-Shoah*, pp. 206–209, Jerusalem 1969.

¹⁶⁴ In a private communication.

strict, with as many as a hundred pupils. R. Moshe himself bore the burden of running the institution,¹⁶⁵ which continued in existence until the Nazi Holocaust.

R. Moshe's last years were tragic indeed. In 1939, when Stolin was occupied by the Russians, the Soviet authorities evicted him from his house.¹⁶⁶ He used to wander like a shadow about the streets of Stolin, beloved of his fellow-Jews whose sufferings he shared, until he was killed three years later, together with all the Jews of Stolin, when the town was destroyed by the Nazis (29th *Elul*, 1942). Of his last days we have the following account by an eye-witness: 'The last time I saw the Rebbe and his family... was the day before the great deportation... The ghetto was plunged in dreadful darkness... Everyone felt that the end was approaching... The angel of death hovered over Stolin... We (my husband and I) went to the Rebbe's house. It was after midnight. In the Rebbe's house all was dark. In the hall we found the Rebbe's wife and her daughter-in-law, Perele, and heart-rending cries rose from the courtyard... We entered the Rebbe's room through an open doorway. There in the darkness we made out the shadows of men sitting at the table, wrapped in *talithoth* [prayer-shawls] and swaying rhythmically to and fro. I could just recognise the Rebbe R. Moishele and his eldest son, Nahum-Shelomo... Now, the Rebbe went up to the prayer-desk and his whispered words reached our ears (my husband caught several expressions and explained to me afterwards that they were part of the *vidduy* [confession of sins]). Suddenly, the Rebbe raised both his arms and called out with great emotion: "Our Father, Our King, have mercy upon us and upon our children!" He then broke out into bitter sobbing... On the morning of the eve of *Rosh Hashanah*, 1942, when all the Jews of Stolin were collected in the market-place to be sent to the slaughter, peering at the terrible spectacle from our hiding-place through a crack in the wall, we did not see the Rebbe and his family there... When I visited Stolin in 1945, I asked the local Gentiles what had happened to the Rebbe. They, and also the Ukrainian police-

men who had been there on that grim day in the market-place, told me that they had not seen the Rebbe among those sent to their death. Some of them reported that, according to one story, the Rebbe and his brother, R. Asherke, and also their brother-in-law, R. Yaakovele, had hidden themselves with their families in the bath-house in the Rebbe's courtyard. Three days after the slaughter, a fire mysteriously broke out there and all of them were burnt alive. The faithful shepherd followed his flock: the beloved and the lovely, in life and in death they were not divided.¹⁶⁷

Thus was the Stolin centre of Karlin hasidism ravaged and destroyed.

R. Elimelekh's taking up residence in Karlin led to the revival of the hasidic community there, though its influence did not extend beyond the limits of its own narrow circle. On the days of *Rosh Hashanah*, when the *shofar* was being sounded or when R. Elimelekh was being escorted to *tashlikh* [the ceremonial purification from sin], and on *Simhath Torah*, when the hasidim used to dance in *hakkafoth* ['circuits'] with the Scrolls of the Law until late into the night, almost till dawn, after spending the whole of the eighth day of *Sukkoth* in song and dance in the Rebbe's *sukkah* [booth]—on those days it was still possible to see in Karlin something of past hasidic glories and to hear an echo of former days.¹⁶⁸

Amongst R. Elimelekh's guests in Karlin on the Jewish Festivals were hasidim from Polesia, Volhynia, Poland and *Erets Yisrael*. R. Elimelekh also took an interest in political and cultural problems connected with Jewish life. Thus, for example, he was well versed in modern literature about hasidism (Buber and similar writers), and treated both the writers and their works with respect. Like R. Moshe in Stolin, R. Elimelekh, too, founded a *yeshivah*—in the neighbouring town of Luninyets (between Pinsk and Stolin)—and raised the necessary funds for its maintenance. In contrast to the heavily philosophical spirit of the *musar* [morality] movement prevailing in the mithnaged *yeshivah* in Karlin, near to the Rebbe's house, his own *yeshivah* was dominated by the spirit of Karlin hasidism, with its joyous affirmation of life. This contrast brought out the essentially hasidic character of the ye-

¹⁶⁵ M. Kopelovich, '*Ha-Yeshivah*,' *Stolin*, *Sefer Zikkaron*, p. 88.

¹⁶⁶ B. Kempinski-Lieberman, '*Yamav ha-Aharonim shel ha-Rebbe Moshele Perlov*,' *Stolin*, *Sefer Zikkaron*, p. 226. Further research is required into the opinion that R. Moshe of Stolin was in Pinsk during the Nazi occupation (see Boneh, *Pinsk*, Vol. II, p. 332).

¹⁶⁷ Kempinski-Lieberman, *ibid.* M. Unger, *Ha-Admorim she-Nispu ba-Shoah*, pp. 206–209.

¹⁶⁸ I have myself witnessed these hasidic celebrations.

shivah, though its primary purpose, like that of its mithnaged counterpart, was the teaching of the *Talmud*. R. Elimelekh won the special esteem of veteran hasidim, and the elders of the Jerusalem community—both in the Old City and in *Meah Shearim*—as well as inhabitants of Tiberias and Safed, were among his followers.

Between 1922 and 1939, R. Elimelekh paid several visits to his followers in Palestine. On one such visit to Jerusalem, he inaugurated there—as commemorated by a special tablet—the Karlin *yeshivah* bearing the name *Beth Aharon ve-Yisrael*. R. Elimelekh kept up a regular and frequent correspondence with his Palestinian followers, for whom his visits to the Holy Land were occasions of festive rejoicing.¹⁶⁹ R. Elimelekh visited Palestine for the last time in the summer of 1939, shortly before the Second World War. Returning to Karlin, he met a martyr's death there in the Nazi Holocaust. Here are eye-witness reports of his last years: 'On a grey morning in *Elul*, 1940 [at the time of the Bolshevik occupation of Pinsk], I happened to visit the house of the Rebbe [of Karlin], of blessed memory. The Rebbe was not at home. He had not yet returned from morning prayers in the *beth midrash*. When I entered the house a most distressing picture of poverty met my eyes, wherever I turned. Particularly stark was the total absence of any kind of furniture in the room, apart from a long, narrow, uncovered table which had once been used for the festive hasidic gatherings on Sabbaths and Festivals, especially for the "third meal" and the *melavveh malkah*, when the hasidim used to sit after the meal singing *zemirot* and other tunes. In the doorway of the kitchen stood a thin woman, clothed in a ragged dress, with a torn kerchief over her head. This was the Rebbe's wife, of blessed memory. Her face was so haggard and sunken that I had difficulty in recognising her. In great pain and distress she told me of "the fresh trouble" that had come upon them: they had been ordered by the housing department of the Town Council to take in a non-Jewish tenant, a government official, and to share their kitchen with him. This meant that the Rebbe's family was in fact deprived

of the use of the kitchen, since the new tenant, a pure Russian from Greater Russia, naturally paid no heed to matters of *kashruth*... and even used to roast a small pig in the oven. Moreover, he was intending to bring the rest of his family to live with them... I left the house greatly depressed... On the intermediate days of *Sukkoth*, 1940, when I was working as the director of the stores of the government consumers' association in the province of Pinsk, some of the Rebbe's followers came to me... After repeated representations, they succeeded in getting the Rebbe registered for work as a night-watchman for the stores... They did this in order to "qualify" the Rebbe as a citizen possessing the full rights of a permanent local employee, and thus ensure that he would not be forced to leave the Pinsk province, like the other "non-productive elements" in Pinsk who were expelled by order of the authorities to remote small towns, a distance of fifty kilometres from the city's boundaries... Presumably, the Rebbe R. Elimelekh did not himself perform the duties of watchman late into the night, but the few of his loyal adherents that remained used to take his place in turn, all through the night till the morning. This went on, to my knowledge, until the 6th November, 1940... and perhaps the Rebbe continued to hold this post for a long time after this.'

'My friend, Mr. Nathan-Note Weiner, of Vladimirets near Visotsk... one of the long-standing followers of the Rebbe, also told me that, on the eve of *Purim*, 1941, he visited the Rebbe at his home in Pinsk in connection with some family matters of his own, and found him in a state of great depression and looking very ill and distraught. The Rebbe told him that he had stopped receiving his followers in his usual manner, since every day brought new and even greater exactions, miseries and persecutions upon him, and matters had reached such a pitch that he was afraid even of the members of his own circle. "My life is so bitter, because I do not know who the people dancing around me are"—such were the Rebbe's words, as reported by the above-mentioned Mr. Weiner.'¹⁷⁰

We do not know any details of how R. Elimelekh lived during the Nazi occupation of Pinsk or of how

¹⁶⁹ M. Bunim, '*Aharon ha-Admorim be-Karlin*,' *Stolin, Sefer Zikkaron*, p. 227; A. Shakh, '*Yeshivath Beth Yisrael*,' *Yizkor Kehilloth Luninyets-Kozhan-Horodok*, edited by Y. Zeevi and others, p. 45, Tel Aviv, 1952; Y. Kule, '*A Hasidisher Shabbes in Luninyets*,' *Yizkor Kehilloth Luninyets-Kozhan-Horodok*, p. 152.

¹⁷⁰ Feivel Ginzburg of Pinsk, now of Ramat Gan, in a letter in his own name and that of Nathan—Note Weiner of Vladimirets (Volhynia), also now in Ramat Gan.

he met his martyr's death. But we have an eye-witness account of the tragic end of his daughter, Hannele. To save herself from a shameful death at the hands of the Nazis, she took her own life by swallowing poison.¹⁷¹ The same eye-witness does not remember whether he saw R. Elimelekh in the Pinsk ghetto. The 14th *Heshvan*, 1942, is considered by the hasidim to be the date of R. Elimelekh's death; whereas the Pinsk-Karlin ghetto was destroyed on the 18th–20th *Heshvan*, 1942.

R. Yaakov, the son of R. Yisrael, was called to the United States in 1923 to become the spiritual leader of his father's followers. He, too, displayed an interest in general Jewish problems. There were in New York originally four *shulkhens* [prayer-houses] of the Stolin hasidim. One of these, which was close to the Rebbe's house and had been purchased by the Stolin hasidim, was called *Beth Aharon*. In Detroit, too, there was a Stolin *shtiebel* [hasidic prayer-house], founded by Stolin hasidim working as mechanics in the city's factories. On the Penitential Days, the Rebbe's followers from various towns used to come to him to pray together with him for a good year. R. Yaakov, for his part, used also to visit his followers in the towns where they lived. His personality provided a rallying point for the faithful adherents of Karlin hasidism. He died in 1946, while visiting his followers in Detroit, and was buried there.

The youngest of R. Yisrael's sons, R. Yohanan, was the spiritual leader of the Karlin hasidim in Volhynia and its environs up to the outbreak of the Second World War. It is related that, when the Nazi forces advanced on the town where he was living, Lutsk, R. Yohanan, together with his wife and two daughters, escaped with the partisan fighters to Russia, where his wife and elder daughter died. After many hardships on the long journey from the Soviet Union through Germany, R. Yohanan and his surviving daughter finally reached Palestine in 1946, thanks to the intercession of his followers, and settled in Haifa. Practically all the Karlin and Stolin hasidim,

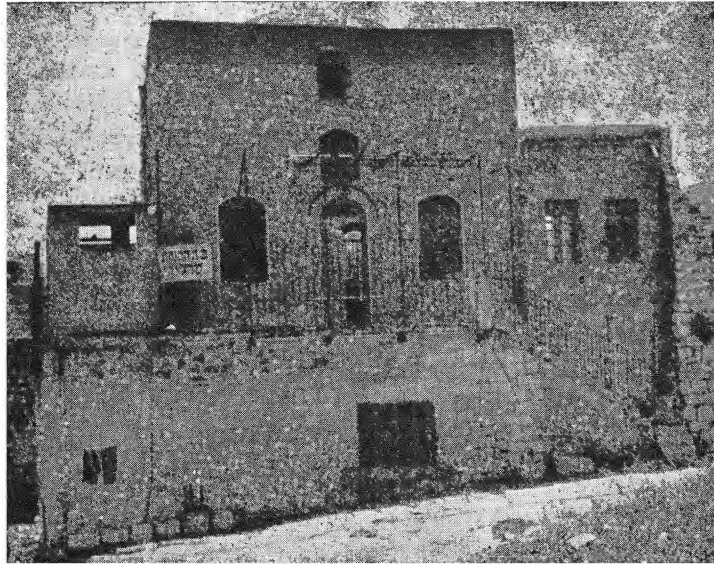
who had been left leaderless by the deaths of R. Moshe and R. Elimelekh, recognised him as their Rebbe. In addition to the already existing Karlin houses of prayer in Safed, Tiberias and Jerusalem, another one was built in Tel Aviv, and a Karlin *minyan* came into being in Haifa. Next to the Karlin *yeshivah* which had previously been established in Jerusalem, R. Yohanan set up another, smaller *yeshivah* for beginners. On the Penitential Days and on *Simhath Torah*, the Karlin hasidim used to come to their Rebbe in Haifa where it was still possible to hear the traditional Karlin melodies. In 1948, R. Yohanan went to the United States, in response to a call from the Karlin hasidim there, and took up residence

The image shows five handwritten signatures in Hebrew, each preceded by a number from 1 to 5. The signatures are written in a cursive, traditional style. The first signature is at the top, followed by the second, third, fourth, and fifth. The fifth signature is the largest and most prominent, featuring a large, stylized initial.

Signatures of the Karlin Tsaddikim

1. Signature of R. Aharon the Great
2. Signature of R. Asher the First
3. Signature of R. Aharon the Second
4. Signature of R. Asher the Second
5. Signature of R. Yisrael, 'the Child'
6. Signatures of the Sons of R. Yisrael

¹⁷¹ A. Dolinko, *Kakh Nehervu Kehilloth Pinsk ve-Karlin*, pp. 73, 83, 84, stencil Tel Aviv (no date of duplication); B. Ben-Porath, 'Ha-Admor mi-Karlin,' in *Hatsofeh* (daily paper), Tel Aviv, 22.6.1945. Reminiscences and legends about the Tsaddikim of the Karlin-Stolin Dynasty have been published in the above-mentioned memorial volume, *Or Zarua*. M. Unger, *Ha-Admorim she-Nispu ba-Shoah*, pp. 9–11.



The prayer-house of the Karlin hasidim in Tiberias, erected in Tiberias by R. Menahem Mendel of Vitebsk in the last quarter of the 18th century

in the same house in which his brother, R. Yaakov, had lived previously. He established a *yeshivah* there and sent regular contributions to the *yeshivah* in Jerusalem. The Karlin hasidim living in America looked to him as their spiritual leader.

R. Yohanan published the *Siddur Beth Aharon ve-Visrael* (New York, 1952), incorporating the rites and customs of the Karlin dynasty of *Tsaddikim*. Included in this prayer-book are sayings and homilies of the Karlin *Tsaddikim*, taken from the original *Beth Aharon* and arranged according to the order of the prayers. At the end of the book there are 'holy letters' written by the Karlin *Tsaddikim*, also taken from the original *Beth Aharon*. This *siddur* is intended to make the religious teachings of Karlin hasidism more widely known. It is still used daily by the Karlin hasidim.

For *Rosh Hashanah*, 1955, R. Yohanan paid his third visit to his followers in Israel (his previous visit had been in 1938), and spent the Festivals of the month of *Tishri* with them. Now a *Karlin Yeshivah* is being built in Jerusalem, a large edifice financed by contributions from R. Yohanan's followers in Israel and the United States. R. Yohanan himself went back to America, intending to return to Israel and settle there permanently. But shortly after reaching America, he fell ill and died on the 21st *Kislev*, 1955—the last representative of the Karlin-Stolin dynasty.

After his death, the Karlin hasidim brought out the volume *Beth Aharon* 'in a third edition by . . . our Teacher R. Yohanan of blessed and pious memory' (Brooklyn 1952, as printed in Brody 1875). On the 18th *Adar II*, R. Yohanan's followers brought his body from the United States to Israel and chose Tiberias as his final resting place—the city in which the Karlin hasidim had first settled in the Holy Land, and which had exercised a spiritual influence on the whole Karlin dynasty. When R. Yohanan died, the last remaining Karlin hasidim were left leaderless.¹⁷² The Karlin melodies still sung here and there in Jerusalem and New York by the still surviving Karlin hasidim are the last flickerings of the bright ray of light which, for six generations, illuminated the darkness of the *galuth* for the Karlin hasidim.

¹⁷² R. Yohanan of Karlin was survived in the U.S.A. by a grandson, Barukh-Yaakov-Meir, his daughter's child, who was born just a year before R. Yohanan's death. Karlin hasidism once again passed through the same crisis as it had known eighty years previously, when the *Tsaddik* R. Asher the Second had died, leaving no other heir than *Ha-Yenuka*—'The Child' (v. *supr.*). Only this time the situation was even worse; for meanwhile the movement's centre in Stolin had been destroyed and there was now nothing but the *Tsaddik's* personality to hold together the surviving remnants of the Karlin hasidim who were scattered about in the U.S.A. and Israel. In contrast to the first

In the early days of hasidism it was customary for the teachers and leaders of the movement to show a special personal interest in certain of their disciples and sometimes even to educate them in their own homes. After the Rebbe's death, some of his followers would choose as his successor the one of these favourite disciples with whom they felt most spiritual affinity. The deceased teacher's disciples would usually continue to propagate their master's doctrine, founding an independent 'dynasty' of their own, side by side with that of their master. This was the way in which the movement spread and branched out. Of the Karlin *Tsaddikim* only R. Aharon the Great and R. Shelomo

trained up disciples of this kind. R. Shelomo of Karlin was, as already noted, the disciple of R. Aharon the Great (though he was also one of the disciples of the *Maggid* of Mezerich); and R. Shelomo's disciples were R. Asher of Stolin, R. Mordekhai of Lakhovich, and R. Uri of Strelisk. Karlin hasidism thus had four offshoots—in Lakhovich, Koidanov, Kobrin, and Słonim—whose influence was confined, in the main, to the territory of Lithuania.

THE LIBESHEI DYNASTY

There were in Pinsk hasidim of three hasidic dynasties that did not owe allegiance to the Karlin *heder*

crisis, when the overwhelming majority of the Karlin hasidim decided to continue their loyal support of the Karlin dynasty, there was this time a split in their ranks. Some of them, particularly the older generation, who felt that they could not live without a Rebbe and did not want to wait until the young heir grew to manhood, installed as their Rebbe, on 15th Av, 1962, the *Tsaddik* of the Lelov dynasty, R. Moshe-Mordekhai Biedermann. This R. Moshe-Mordekhai, who like his forefathers was close to Karlin hasidism, now received the title of '*Tsaddik* of Lelov-Karlin hasidim.'

Below is the text of the declaration made by the hasidim at R. Moshe-Mordekhai's investiture: 'With God's help and on behalf of the Karlin hasidim in the holy city of Jerusalem and all the cities of our Holy Land and the Diaspora, we hereby undertake to regard you as our Master, Teacher and Rebbe—our divinely appointed leader. We trust that you will guide the holy congregation in the way of the holy forefathers of the Karlin-Stolin dynasty. We pray to Him that dwells on high that we may all be granted to advance, together with our Rebbe, to meet our righteous Messiah.'

However, a large section of the hasidim—consisting mainly of the younger generation, but including also some older men—considered that the installation of the Lelov Rebbe meant the end of the Karlin dynasty and its role in history. They strongly opposed the investiture of a 'foreign' *Tsaddik* as their Rebbe and swore allegiance to 'The Child.' Even individual families were rent by this dissension, with the grandfather, for example, joining the supporters of the Lelov *Tsaddik*, while the son and grandson remained loyal to 'The Child.' The Jerusalem prayer-houses were also divided by the schism. The Lelov-Karlin hasidim prayed in the old prayer-house of the Karlin hasidim. But the building of the large *Yeshivah Beth Aharon ve-Yisrael*, in Jerusalem, which was the main centre of the Karlin hasidim, became the stronghold of the loyal supporters of 'The Child.' These were joined by the Karlin hasidim in the U.S.A.

The future of Karlin hasidism—from which the whole

of Lithuanian hasidism sprung—will be decided by history. (See the following Hebrew newspapers: *Maa-riv*, 16.8.1962; *Haarets*, 19.8.1962 and 3.2.1964; *Heruth*, 18.2.1963 and 1.3.1963; *Yedioth Aharonoth*, 14.8.1964.)

In his work *Divrei Aharon* (v. supr., n. 161), A. Hausman published sixty letters from R. Elimelekh (pp. 125–186), and thirty-two from R. Yohanan (pp. 187–208), which provide first-hand evidence for the opinions of these two Karlin *Tsaddikim*. Most of R. Elimelekh's letters were written to his followers in Jerusalem for the various Festivals. He encourages them 'to be strong in joyfulness and not to pay too much regard to "Frumkeit,"... for the way of hasidism is to be always joyful and this is the quality that delivers a man from everything evil. Whereas, through excessive "Frumkeit," we may fall (Heaven forbid!) into melancholy, which was greatly abhorred by our holy forefathers... Let us band together... in unity and affection, to implant in Jewish hearts love and pious awe, and to pluck out the irreligion that has spread like a plague... Everyone must guard against dissension... for you have all bound yourselves to me... although by my deeds I am unworthy of this.'

Most of R. Yohanan's letters—nearly all of them dated only by the Portion of the Week—were written while he was in the United States to students in the Karlin *yeshivah* in Jerusalem. Like his brother, R. Elimelekh, he too stresses the principles which were characteristic of hasidism as a whole, and particularly of its Karlin branch: '... To live in unity and brotherhood, to raise oneself up above the darkness... to exalt the *Torah* and hasidism... to study constantly... and to do everything with enthusiasm, as we have always desired...' Particularly interesting is the pledge of allegiance from the 15th *Shevat*, 1948, entitled *Ahavath ve-Ahduth Haverim* ['Love and Brotherhood of Fellow-Members'], which is signed by twenty Karlin hasidim and proclaims their allegiance to their Rebbe, R. Yohanan, and to each other.

Also in his book *Birkath Aharon*, Hausman quotes written statements of sons of the *Tsaddik* R. Yisrael of Stolin, and oral remarks attributed to them.

(or school). These were the dynasties of Liubeshov (popularly called "Libeshei"), Horodok and Berezna, all of which originated in Volhynia. The Libeshei and Berezna dynasties were genealogically related.¹⁷³ The founder of the Libeshei dynasty was the son-in-law of R. David Halevi of Stepan, the well-known Volhynia *Tsaddik* and *Maggid* and author of the volume *Hanhagath Adam*, and the disciple and son-in-law of one of the Besht's disciples, R. Yehiel-Mikhal of Zlochov. And the founder of the Berezna dynasty was this same R. David Halevi's son.

The founder of the Libeshei dynasty, R. Shemaryahu (Weingarten), was the son of R. Avraham-Abba-Yosef of Soroka (in Bessarabia), a disciple of the Great *Maggid*, R. Baer of Mezerich.¹⁷⁴ At the beginning of the 19th century (according to hasidic tradition, in 1802), R. Shemaryahu was Rebbe in Liubeshov-Libeshei, a small town close to Pinsk, at the same time officiating as *Rav* in Libeshei and in the neighbouring town of Kobrin.¹⁷⁵ He had adherents in the small towns round about Pinsk (Yanovo, Telekhan, Homsk, Motele and others). His sphere of influence stretched between Pinsk and Kobrin, and even in these two towns themselves there were "Libeshei

tables". In the terms of the official rabbinical appointment which, according to hasidic tradition, R. Shemaryahu obtained from the Jews of Kobrin, the position of *Rav* in Kobrin was vested in him and his sons in perpetuity, and he was also empowered to appoint *dayyanim* [Jewish judges] and ritual slaughterers in the town as he thought fit. Consequently, the *dayyanim* and slaughterers of Kobrin were hasidim, even though most of the Jewish population were mithnagdim. R. Shemaryahu's following was also swelled by some of the mithnagdim from the neighbouring small towns. In this way hasidism spread, to a limited extent, in this part of the region of Polesia, including Pinsk.

The appointment of the *Tsaddik* of the Libeshei dynasty as *Rav* of all the neighbouring small towns—the only instance of its kind in Lithuanian hasidism—is confirmed by the writer Hayyim Chemerinski in his memoirs. His eye-witness accounts throw light—albeit from the satirical standpoint of a *maskil*—on the state of Libeshei hasidism and on the attitude adopted to it by the hasidim of the Kobrin branch of the Karlin movement.¹⁷⁶

R. Shemaryahu died in Pinsk in 1846. Libeshei hasidim from Pinsk and from the surrounding region used to visit his grave to kindle a memorial light over it.

R. Shemaryahu's successor was his son R. Yehiel-Mikhal, and after him his second son, R. Avraham-Abba, who was *Rav* of the nearby small town of Yanovo (between Pinsk and Kobrin) and in Libeshei.¹⁷⁷ At this time, after the death of R. Shemaryahu, the influence of the Libeshei dynasty in Kobrin itself passed, as a result of dissension, to the Kobrin 'court' (R. Moshe of Kobrin, R. Meir Meirim).¹⁷⁸

¹⁷³ Gottlieb, *Oholei Shem*, p. 103; Grossman, *Shem u-Sheerith*, pp. 31, 51; Tsinovets, 'Le-Toledoth ha-Rabbanuth be-Kobrin,' *Sefer Kobrin*, pp. 26, 27.—Information provided personally by the last Libeshei Rebbe, R. Yitshak-Aharon about the dates of the *Tsaddikim* of the dynasty. Gottlieb, the author of *Oholei Shem*, was a native of Pinsk and closely acquainted with the *Tsaddikim* of the dynasty in Polesia. His book is therefore to be regarded as a reliable source of information. The description of the tragic martyr's death of R. Yitshak-Aharon, the last of the Libeshei dynasty of *Tsaddikim*, given below is taken from the article by D. Epstein, 'Ha-Yehudi ha-Yehidi' ['The Only Jew'], *Yalkut More-sheth*, No. 2, pp. 10–11, Tel Aviv 1975. The date mentioned there—9th Av, July 2nd 1942—contains a double error. The Nazi massacre of Jews in Libeshei took place in 1941, as stated several times by Epstein himself later in the same article. In 1941, the 9th Av fell on August 2nd, whereas the author has mistakenly written July 2nd. I too was told by the writer of the memoirs that the *Tsaddik* R. Yitshak-Aharon was murdered by the Nazis on *Tishah be-Av* [9th Av]. I do not recall that my informant mentioned the civil date. The day of the week—Sunday—stated by the writer also suits the corrected date given above. In that year—1941—*Tishah be-Av* fell on the Sabbath (Saturday) and was postponed to Sunday.

¹⁷⁴ Grossman, *op. cit.*, p. 51.

¹⁷⁵ Gottlieb, *op. cit.*, *ibid.*; *Jewish Encyclopaedia*, Vol. VII, p. 526, s.v.: Kobrin.

¹⁷⁶ Chemerinski, *Ayarathi Motele*, p. 67 ff., Tel Aviv 1951; Cf., Y. Z. Vilenski, 'Zikhronoth,' *Sefer Kobrin*, p. 283. Even in a small town in Polesia like Motele we find a 'mixed population'—mithnagdim, Kobrin hasidim (like the father of H. Chemerinski, the writer), Libeshei hasidim and Stolin hasidim (like the maternal grandfather of the first President of Israel, Dr. Chaim Weizmann). H. Weizmann-Lichtenstein, *Be-Tsel Kora-thenu*, p. 34, Tel Aviv 1948.

¹⁷⁷ Gottlieb, *op. cit.*, *ibid.*, and statements by the descendants of the dynasty.

¹⁷⁸ Vilenski, *op. cit.*, *ibid.* The author mistakenly wrote 'R. Asher' for 'R. Avraham-Abba.'

After the death of R. Avraham-Abba in Pinsk (1861), the position of Rebbe was held first by his son R. Hayyim-Yitshak (from 1861 to 1879) and then by his grandson, R. Yaakov-Leib (from 1879 to 1922). According to information from hasidic sources, the Libeshei hasidim in those days numbered up to two thousand. The fact that his son-in-law, R. Eliezer-Lippa Klepfish, was *Rav* in Libeshei¹⁷⁹ shows the extent of R. Yaakov-Leib's influence over the whole Jewish population. At the same time (1886), another son of R. Hayyim-Yitshak's, R. Abba, took up residence as Rebbe of a small town of Yanovo. The small area of Libeshei hasidim was thus split between two factions, with consequent dissensions and conflicts. Of these we can read in the satirical description written in 1886 by a native of Yanovo, Yisrael Levin.¹⁸⁰ According to this source, the Libeshei dynasty was originally founded in the small town Yanovo, and its hasidim were originally named after this town. It was R. Avraham-Abba, the son of the founder of the dynasty, R. Shemaryahu, that transferred his place of residence to Libeshei. As already stated, these two small towns were very close to Pinsk, and therefore Libeshei hasidim penetrated to some extent into Pinsk too, especially since some Libeshei hasidim moved into that town.

R. Abba died about 1924.

R. Yitshak-Aharon, the son and successor of the above named R. Yaakov-Leib in Libeshei, also lived in Pinsk, where he had his followers and his synagogue. On Friday evenings, after the Sabbath eve meal, the men would leave their families and come to the Rebbe in Pinsk to sing Libeshei melodies, and sometimes also to hear an expository commentary on the *Torah*.

In the period between the two World Wars, he several times visited his adherents in America. In this period, while he was living in Pinsk, he gave his support, like the *Tsaddik* of Karlin, R. Elimelekh, who was then living in Karlin, to the *Tifereth Bahurim* ["Exemplary Young Men"] evening institute for the study of *Torah* and *Talmud* by young men after their day's work.

¹⁷⁹ Gottlieb, *op. cit.*, *ibid.* Eliezer-Lippa Klepfish was later a member of the Rabbinate in Brest-Litovsk: *Brisk de-Lita, Entsiklopediyah shel Galuyoth*, ed. A. Steinman, p. 342, Jerusalem 1954.

¹⁸⁰ Printed in *Hamelits* (daily paper), Year 26, 1886, pp. 544-545; see also: B. Fishko, *Gilgul Hayyim*, p. 9 ff., Tel Aviv 1948.

He died a martyr's death in the extermination of Polesian Jewry. Of his tragic end we have an eyewitness report by David Epstein, a native of the town of Libeshei. He writes as follows: 'I saw how the Gestapo took our holy Rebbe, R. Yitshak-Aharon Weingarten, and his two handsome sons and dragged them off by their long, comely beards and side-whiskers to a dark, dank cellar, where they tortured them horribly... This was on the morning of the 9th Av, July [?] 2nd 1942 [?]. They made them run to work. The holy Rebbe too... went... to work... They cut off one half of his [sc. the Rebbe's] beard... stripped him naked, and ordered him to sing and dance and shout... They ordered him to wash the horses with his *tallith katan* [the fringed vest worn by orthodox Jews, great *Arba Kanfoth*]. After an hour, members of the Ukrainian police and the Gestapo surrounded the cellar and began to drive out the wretched people inside... beating them on the head with rubber truncheons. Our holy Rebbe, R. Yitshak-Aharon, had not the strength to walk, so they took him in a cart... and transported him... to the other side of the river Stuhod... There they ordered them... to dig pits for themselves... When, after hard labour, they had completed the digging, all the Jews were ordered to take off their clothes... A board was placed over the pit, and they were ordered to stand on the board, five at a time. In this way, they were all shot. And the holy Rebbe and his two sons were tortured... before they were killed. The killing of our holy Rebbe and his sons... ended on July 3rd.'

Although Libeshei hasidim originated and developed in the centre of Lithuanian Polesia in and around Pinsk, it was essentially an offshoot of the hasidism of Volhynia, the home of the founders of its dynasty. In character it belonged to the whole hasidic movement of the time, in giving the cult of the *Tsaddik* predominance over all the other principles of hasidic doctrine. The Libeshei *Tsaddikim* left no written works. They were opposed to fasting and stressed the importance of joyfulness, though they did not know how to realise this principle in their lives as Karlin hasidism did. They also had their own hasidic melodies. A characteristic phenomenon of Libeshei hasidism was that its *Tsaddikim* held the office of *Rav* in Lithuanian towns (Kobrin, Yanovo and Libeshei). This is evidence of the good relations prevailing between them and their predominantly mithnaged environment, and

also of the authority wielded by the founder of the Libeshei dynasty, R. Shemaryahu. This is further demonstrated by the fact that R. Shemaryahu's son married the daughter of the then famous Pinsk *Rav*, R. Hayyim, the son of R. Perets Hacohen,¹⁸¹ who settled in Palestine.¹⁸²

THE HORODOK DYNASTY

At the beginning of the 19th century, an independent hasidic dynasty was established in the small town of David-Horodok, near Pinsk and close to Stolin. The adherents of this dynasty were known in the region of Polesia, and particularly in the neighbourhood of Pinsk and in Pinsk itself, as 'the Horodok hasidim' (not to be confused with the followers of R. Menahem-Mendel of Vitebsk, who were also called by this name). This was the smallest of the offshoots of the hasidic dynasties in Lithuania, its followers being confined to the small area stretching between David-Horodok, Lakhva, Luninyets, Pinsk and Kozhan-Horodok. While the Libeshei hasidim gained a foothold west of Pinsk, between Pinsk and Kobrin, the small Horodok branch established itself to the east, between Pinsk and Lakhva.

The founder of this dynasty was R. Wolf, known to the hasidim as Wolfche (Ginsburg), the son of the *Tsaddik* R. Shemuel Halevi of Koshivka (a small town in Volhynia not far from the well-known hasidic centre of Neskhizh).¹⁸³ R. Shemuel was the close friend of a well-known Volhynia *Tsaddik*, R. Mordekhai of Neskhizh.¹⁸⁴ From a letter written by R. Asher the First of Stolin to R. Wolf (between 1802 and 1826) it transpires that there were friendly relations,

and also marriage connections between these two *Tsaddikim*.¹⁸⁵

We do not know exactly how R. Wolf managed to establish an independent dynasty in the heart of 'the Karlin domain.' The only hasidic source that mentions R. Wolf describes him as 'the *Rav* and *Av Beth-Din*'.¹⁸⁶ There was also a popular tradition that R. Wolf was first chosen as *Rav* in David-Horodok and only afterwards, apparently on the strength of his distinguished ancestry, was also appointed Rebbe in the same town. Precise information about his personality, his life, and the date of his death is lacking, but the various popular legends about his death are evidence of the extent of his renown and influence.

His successor as Rebbe was his son, R. David, who, according to popular tradition, was not a person of much consequence. Thus, for example, his name is not mentioned at all in the short family biography of hasidic provenance.¹⁸⁷ In contrast to this, his son, R. Yisrael-Yosef Halevi, was one of the chief figures in this branch of hasidism. He made a name for himself as an erudite talmudic scholar, and kept firm control of his followers. He was feared and respected by the inhabitants of his small town, and also by those of the surrounding district. In the Karlin suburb of Pinsk, there was a synagogue in which his hasidim, who were living in the town, used to pray. This synagogue was called 'Horodoker Shulkhen' ('The Synagogue of the Horodok hasidim'). R. Yisrael-Yosef's followers included also Jews of high social standing (for instance, the well-known Pinsk family of the Tseitlins used to pray in this synagogue), and even some from the mithnaged homes. Thus, for example, whenever he visited the Horodok house of prayer in Pinsk, the official (government) Rabbi of Pinsk, the public worker and *maskil*, Beilin,¹⁸⁸ would come to his 'table,' as would other leading local figures. R. Yisrael-Yosef was a personal friend of the well-known Volhynian

¹⁸¹ A. Shisha, *Ha-Darom* (journal), Nos. 5-6, p. 178, New York 1958; A. L. Frumkin, *Toledoth Hakhmei Yerushalayim*, additions... by A. Rivlin, Pt. III, Supplements, p. 57, n., Jerusalem 1929.

¹⁸² A. Yaari, *Sheluhei Erets Yisrael*, pp. 769, 777. Amongst the *kolelim* that existed in Palestine in the last quarter of the 19th century was also a 'Libeshei kolel' (*Otsar Yisrael*, ed. Y. D. Eisenstein, Vol. IV, p. 286, s.v.: *Halukkah*, London 1935).

¹⁸³ Kleinbaum, *Shema Shelomo*, Pt. II, n. 21.

¹⁸⁴ *Zikhron Tov* by R. Yitshak of Neskhizh, published by Y. Landa, p. 94, Petrokov 1892. R. Shemuel was the founder of an independent hasidic dynasty which was forgotten even in hasidic circles. His successor as Rebbe in Koshivka was his son, R. Mikhal, followed in 1892 by his grandson, R. Shemuel (*Zikhron Tov*, p. 94).

¹⁸⁵ *Beth Aharon*, by R. Aharon of Karlin, p. 294. In this letter 'my son Aharon, long may he live!' is R. Aharon the Second, who was born in 1802. R. Asher the First died in 1826.

¹⁸⁶ *Zikhron Tov*, p. 93. This source implies that R. Wolf died before the month of *Tammuz*, 1859, since his grandson and successor in Horodok, R. Yisrael-Yosef, mentions him in connection with the blessing over the dead, in a letter that he wrote at that date to R. Yitshak of Neskhizh.

¹⁸⁷ *Zikhron Tov*, *ibid.*

¹⁸⁸ On this person, see *Toysend Jor Pinsk*, pp. 270, 329.

Tsaddik, R. Yitshak of Neskhizh, with whom he was also connected by marriage. His dependence on R. Yitshak is clear from his letters to him (from the years 1856, 1861, 1864). When he writes 'I entreat and beseech... that he should not forget us... that I may be able to dwell in my house in peace and quiet,'¹⁸⁹ he is apparently referring to the quarrel that arose at that time between his own followers and the Karlin-Stolin hasidim, who regarded the Horodok hasidim as their inferiors. The form of prayer in the Horodok synagogues was close to that of Volhynia.

When R. Yisrael-Yosef died in c. 1899, a common structure [*ohel*] was erected over his grave and those of his father and grandfather in the Horodok cemetery.

On the state of Horodok hasidism after the death of R. Yisrael-Yosef, and on the difference between the hasidim of Horodok and those of Karlin-Stolin, we find the following first-hand account in a book of memoirs written by a native of the town:¹⁹⁰ 'David-Horodok had its own dynasty of *Tsaddikim*. The sons and grandsons of the old Rebbe... R. Yisrael-Yosef, still dwell in the town... His sons and daughters lived in the street in which stands the *beth midrash* of "the old Rebbe." They lived in poverty, but enjoyed general respect reflected from the cold, distant light of the star that had gone out—their grandfather, "the old Rebbe." It was otherwise in the prayer-house (*shtiebel*) of the Stolin hasidim. Here all was happiness and joy, especially when the Rebbe from Stolin came to the small town. On those days even the *mithnagdim* used to go to their prayer-house in secret and pressing themselves to the side of the roads, for fear of a blow on the neck or back from some drunken Stolin hasid. Still worse was the plight of the followers of "the old Rebbe" who were downcast and depressed in spirit. David-Horodok was the "capital" of the Rebbe, R. Yisrael-Yosef, just as Stolin was the "capital" of R. Aharon.'

The difference between the spiritual and social life of Horodok hasidim and Stolin-Karlin hasidim in this period is commented on by another eye-witness, a native of the town of Luninyets, near Pinsk, where too there were Horodok hasidim. Some passages from

these memoirs are quoted here,¹⁹¹ since it may be assumed that they reflect the mutually appreciative attitude prevailing between the two groups in Pinsk too, although apparently there were fewer Horodok hasidim in Pinsk than in Luninyets.

'The large prayer-house known to the Jews as "Die Alte Shul" was the centre of the Stolin hasidim, while "Die Horodoker Shul" was the centre of the Horodok hasidim... Most of the Stolin hasidim prayed according to their own special form of prayer and with the fervour characteristic of the Stolin-Karlin hasidim... The Stolin hasidim prayed at the top of their voices and with great fervour, to the accompaniment of hand-clapping, beating on the bench, stamping or running from place to place and from corner to corner of the *beth-midrash*... What they mainly paid attention to was the *kavvanah* [intensity of the prayer], and some of their prayers truly made a tremendous impression... The "third meal" that they conducted in the prayer-house after the *minhah* [afternoon prayer] on Saturday are a chapter in themselves. The singing of the *zemiroth* [liturgical poems] by the unconduted hasidic choir rose to ever greater heights of ecstasy... to the "exaltation of the spirit". Then the hasidim stood up from the tables, formed a ring, and began to dance around the pulpit, their arms linked or their hands on each other's shoulders. Here all distinctions and contrasts disappeared: rich and poor, scholar and simple man, old and young—they all merged into a single mass of dancing Jews. The *beth midrash* of the Horodok hasidim was the second in the town... In the old *beth midrash* most of the worshippers were from "the town's high society"—rich timber merchants; here [in the Horodok *beth midrash*] most of them were artisans... The founders and builders were simple folk... and this *beth midrash* had a popular character. Here the prevailing atmosphere was... of modesty and simplicity. The Rebbe of the Horodok hasidim also conducted himself with simple modesty... The Horodok hasidim did not have just one Rebbe, but the whole of the Ginsburg family: R. Bobele (R. Wolf), R. Alterke, and later the young Rebbe, R. Velvele, the son of the Rebbe R. Itsikel (R. Yitshak). Most of the Horodok hasidim were... cobblers, carters, carpenters and the like... Their

¹⁸⁹ *Zikhron Tov*, *ibid.*

¹⁹⁰ M. Slutski, 'David-Horodok mit fuftsig Jor zurik,' *David-Horodok, Sefer Zikkaron*, ed. Y. Edan and others, p. 405 ff, Tel Aviv (no date of publication).

¹⁹¹ Y. Zeevi, 'Ishei Kahal,' *Yizkor Kehilloth Luninyets-Kozhan-Horodok*, p. 36 ff., 138 ff., Tel Aviv 1952.

prayers were not noisy but restrained, the words and tunes well known and moderate. The *gabbaim* [wardens] were simple men... Here, too, "third meals" [on Saturday] were held, but in a more modest manner... The Horodok hasidim had their own *zemirot* and melodies. They, too, danced, but without the ecstatic fervour of the Stolin hasidim. Here they besought not only the national blessing of "salvation and solace," but also such more personal boons as: "May we soon drink at your daughter's wedding!"... and the like... In the prayer-house of the Horodok hasidim a liberal spirit prevailed... There was always general rejoicing amongst the Horodok hasidim during the traditional visit to the town Luninyets of one of the Horodok *Tsaddikim* (R. Bobele, R. Alterke or the young Rebbe, R. Velvle). The rejoicing went on for a whole week... R. Bobele made a deep impression on those who knew him by his remarkable good-heartedness and modesty. He was greatly loved and revered by his followers.'

These memoirs give us a picture of the relations prevailing between these different branches of hasidim, although in Pinsk this difference was not felt on account of the small number of Horodok hasidim in the town. The memoirs testify to the way of life characteristic in those days of each separate branch, as seen through the eyes of 'enlightened' [*maskilim*] contemporaries.

Of R. Yisrael-Yosef's descendants, his grandson, R. Yitshak (d. 1908) still had a certain influence. Of the latter-day descendants of R. Yisrael-Yosef of Horodok mention should be made of R. Aharon, who lived in nearby Luninyets. He was not an official *Rav* or Rebbe, and was supported by the local inhabitants and the Horodok hasidim. He spent all his days studying *Torah* and was in the prayer-house the acknowledged spiritual leader, a noble and modest man who lived in poverty and want. He did not preach or expound, but taught the *Torah* to all. He was killed by the Nazis, together with all the population of Luninyets.

R. Aharon's brother, R. Moshe, was the last Rebbe of the Horodok dynasty. R. Moshe studied *Torah* and *Talmud* in the *yeshivah* of Volozhin and Lida. A gifted preacher, he became a supporter of Zionism. His tragic death at the hands of the Nazis is described by eye-witnesses: 'Three weeks after the mass murder of the men in Horodok, a women's ghetto was created... Amongst the women there were men dis-

guised in women's clothes, one of them being the Rebbe, R. Moshe, the son of R. Velvle Ginsburg. He was recognised by the Gentile citizens who were examining the faces of the women on the transport, taken off and killed.'

Apart from the letters of R. Yisrael-Yosef, which have already been mentioned, the Horodok *Tsaddikim* left no written records. The dynasty came into being, it would seem, with the choice of the son of a *Tsaddik* as *Rav*, who thus became both *Rav* and Rebbe at the same time. In this respect, the rise of this dynasty was similar to the rise of Libeshei dynasty. In the small Horodok branch of hasidism, the only outstanding personalities were the *Tsaddikim* R. Wolf and R. Yisrael-Yosef, who somewhat increased the number of hasidim in this corner of Polesia.¹⁹²

THE BEREZNA DYNASTY

Unlike the Libeshei and Horodok dynasties, which arose in Polesia, the Berezna dynasty came into being in Volhynia—where there were also Karlin hasidim—and penetrated into Polesia from there.

The founder of the Berezna dynasty, R. Yehiel-Mikhal, known amongst the hasidim as R. Mikhele (Pichenik), was the son of the *Tsaddik* and *Maggid*, R. David Halevi of Stepan in Volhynia. He at first lived at Stolin in the house of his father-in-law, R. Leib.¹⁹³ Later, presumably after the death of his father (1809),¹⁹⁴ he took up residence as one of his father's successors, in the small town of Berezna not far from Stepan (between Sarny and Rovno). Accord-

¹⁹² The reminiscences and legends about the *Tsaddikim* of the Horodok dynasty quoted here have been published in the volume *David-Horodok, Sefer Zikkaron*, pp. 92, 95, 153, 155, 208 ff., 412; in an article written by one of the descendants of the dynasty, Ts. Kunde-Ginsburg, '*Zikhronoth*,' *ibid.*, p. 97-99; and in the memorial volume *Yizkor Kehilloth Luninyets-Kozhan-Horodok*, pp. 36 ff., 139, 194, 207, 218 ff.

The Horodok dynasty, like its Koshivka origin, was evidently forgotten even by the hasidim themselves, since neither of them is mentioned in the genealogical table of the hasidic dynasties (*Ilana de-Tsaddikaya*, Warsaw 1927).

¹⁹³ Grossman, *op. cit.*, pp. 31, 51. According to family tradition, R. Leib was a disciple of R. Shelomo of Karlin.

¹⁹⁴ In Dubnow's 'Hasidic Archives' in the YIVO Institute in New York there is a reproduction of the epitaph of R. David, the son of R. Yehudah Halevi of Stepan, who died on the night of the Day of Atonement, 1809.

ing to hasidic sources, he settled in Berezna on the invitation and with the support of the local *porits* [Gentile aristocrat and estate-owner] who hoped, by establishing a hasidic 'court' in Berezna, to develop the town to his own material benefit.¹⁹⁵ The ties formed by R. Mikhal with the Jews of Stolin during his residence there continued after his departure, and both in Stolin itself and in the surrounding district (Pinsk, Luninyets and other towns) there were 'Berezna houses of prayer,' even though the actual number of Berezna hasidim in these towns was small. It is quite possible that R. Mikhal was helped in making a name for himself in Stolin by the fact that this was the time (after 1810) when R. Asher the First left Stolin and moved to Karlin.

R. Mikhal died in 1848.¹⁹⁶

His son and successor, R. Yitshak, was the leader of the Berezna hasidim till 1865.¹⁹⁷ He gained a reputation as a wonder-worker and his main influence was with the simple masses. Even Christians frequently turned to him for advice or to obtain his blessing.¹⁹⁸

After R. Yitshak's death, the dynasty split into two. One group, including the Berezna hasidim living in Polesia, recognised R. Yitshak's son, R. Yosef, as their leader; while the other chose his son-in-law, R. Hayyim (Taubman), who was also the son of the Libeshei Rebbe, R. Yehiel-Mikhal. R. Hayyim founded his own dynasty in Berezna. He died in 1907.

R. Yosef died young in 1869.

His eldest son and successor, R. Avraham-Shemuel, faithfully preserved the heritage of his fathers for forty years, till 1917. He won the esteem of the *mithnagdim*, and used to pay regular visits to his supporters in the towns of Polesia (Stolin, Pinsk, Luninyets) in order to maintain his links with them.

Here is an eye-witness description of R. Avraham Shemuel himself and of the life led by the Berezna hasidim: 'R. Shemuel was a faithful leader and good father to the hasidim of Berezna and the surrounding district, up to Pinsk and Luninyets . . . He was a short, broad-shouldered man, with fiery eyes, penetrating and wise. He had a long whitish-yellowish beard, and wore a silk or satin caftan and white trousers. All this

gave him a dignified appearance. On *Simkath Torah*, the Berezna hasidim flocked to the Rebbe's house where the "court" musicians competed . . . And on *Hanukkah* nights, hasidim of all classes flocked to his house—merchants and artisans, every one of whom, according to, and even beyond, his means, gave *Hanukkah* money to the Rebbe and enjoyed *Maoz tsur* [the *Hanukkah* hymn] sung in the special Berezna fashion. On Sabbaths they came, towards evening, to the "third meal" to obtain the privilege of a crumb or a piece of "gefilte" fish . . . When the Rebbe began the *havdalah* prayer in a low voice with "Behold God is my salvation," the hasidim listened intently to these words and firmly believed in the God of salvation . . . Prayers and supplications in the town: the Rebbe is ill! For whole nights Psalms were read, and on the last night the people of Berezna did not close their eyes. As the reports on the Rebbe's condition came in one after the other, the foreboding grew that he was about to depart this life. Berezna mourned his death for a whole year.'¹⁹⁹

R. Avraham-Shemuel of Berezna was succeeded by his three sons. The first, R. Yitshak the Second, also held the position of *Rav* in Berezna,²⁰⁰ and used to visit his followers in Polesia, Pinsk, Luninyets and other places. He died in the autumn of 1939. The second son, R. Nahum, was *Rav* and Rebbe in the small Volhynian town of Dombrovits (between Berezna and Stolin). He was killed by the Nazis in 1942. The third son, R. Yosef, settled in Sarny.²⁰¹ The successor of R. Yitshak the Second, R. Aharon, settled in Rovno. He died of cold and hunger while hiding with the partisans in one of the forests of Polesia, and his grave was dug there by his two daughters. His other son was R. Yehiel-Mikhal.

The parallel branch of the Berezna dynasty was headed first by the sons of R. Hayyim, R. Gedalyah and R. Aharon, and after R. Aharon, by his son, R.

¹⁹⁵ A. Pichenik, '*Ha-Shoshaloth ha-Hasidiyoth be-Vohlyn*': Berezna, *Yalkut Vohlyn*, Osef *Zikhronoth u-Teudoth*, No. 5, Tel Aviv 1946.

¹⁹⁶ Grossman, *Shem u-Sheerith*, p. 31.

¹⁹⁷ Pichenik, *ibid.*

¹⁹⁸ Pichenik, *ibid.*

¹⁹⁹ Dr. G. Beigel, *Ayarathi Berezna*, p. 143, Tel Aviv 1954; A. Avatihi, '*Ha-Shosheleth ha-Bereznait*,' *Sefer Stolin*, p. 151; Y. Zeevi, '*Luninyetser Botei-Mid-roshim*,' *Yizkor Kehilloth Luninyets-Kozhan-Horodok*, pp. 140, 142, Tel Aviv 1952.

²⁰⁰ Gottlieb, *Oholei Shem*, p. 30.

²⁰¹ Pichenik, *op. cit.*; Dr. G. Beigel, *Ayarathi Berezna*, p. 23 ff., (this book contains details about the last representatives of the dynasty); Y. L. Yonathan, *Nof va-Geza*, p. 10 ff., Tel Aviv 1955.

Hayyim, R. Gedalyah and R. Hayyim died as martyrs, together with their followers.

One of the grandsons of R. Avraham-Shemuel of Berezna, R. Ben-Zion Rabinovich, emigrated to America and founded a synagogue in Detroit named, after his grandfather, *Beth Shemuel*.

The Berezna hasidim who lived in Pinsk were, in later years, loyal followers of their *Tsaddikim*—R. Avraham-Shemuel, to whom they used to make the 'pilgrimage' from Pinsk and its environs on *Rosh Hashanah*;²⁰² his son, R. Yitshak the Second;²⁰³ and finally the latter's son, R. Yehiel-Mikhal. The 'Pinsker Shtime' newspaper of August 12th 1938 contains the following report: 'A Distinguished Visitor to Pinsk. The Rebbe of Berezna, Our Righteous Teacher and *Rav* R. Yitshak Pichenik of Berezna is staying in the house of Feivel Minkovski . . . and for the coming Sabbath the Rebbe will travel to Luninyets.' R. Yehiel-Mikhal was an enthusiastic Zionist, who made the *aliyah* to *Erets-Yisrael* with his family in 1922 but because of a serious illness returned to Poland in 1928, and settled in Karlin as the *Tsaddik* of the Berezna hasidim in Pinsk. In 1935 he went back to Berezna and succeeded his deceased father as *Tsaddik* there. He was killed in the Holocaust.²⁰⁴

The Berezna dynasty left no book or other written record. Like the Libeshei and Horodok dynasties, that of Berezna was the product of the Volhynia hasidic movement and resembled it in character, being free of the tendency to talmudic scholarship which was found in other branches of hasidism at the time. Most of the Berezna hasidim were simple people whose unquestioning belief in their Rebbe strengthened their trust in God and gave added joy to their lives.

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Of the more than forty synagogues and *batei midrash* in Pinsk and Karlin from the middle of the last century onwards only six were hasidic: two synagogues

of the Karlin-Stolin dynasty, one of each of the other dynasties mentioned above—Libeshei, Horodok, Berezna—and one synagogue called *Konfederat* [from 'confederation'] *Shulkhen*, frequented by 'foreign' hasidim who did not belong to any of the hasidic dynasties in Polesia. The small number of the hasidic synagogues in Pinsk and Karlin shows that, despite the great importance of the Karlin hasidim in the history of hasidism, Pinsk was a mithnaged stronghold.

*

Together with the destruction of the Karlin-Stolin dynasty in the Nazi Holocaust went the loss of the Stolin *genizah*, the great store of hasidic historical documents. These archives, which served as a basis of this present study and which have been frequently mentioned in this monograph, were referred to by the hasidim themselves as 'the holy writings.' They were housed in the cellar of the old Rebbe's residence (the 'court') in Stolin and comprised the following items: the correspondence of the Karlin *Tsaddikim* and of the *Tsaddikim* of other important dynasties, from every period of the hasidic movement; regulations governing various associations; wills; manuscripts, published and unpublished; pledge of loyalty (*shetar hiikh-kashruth*) given by R. Yitshak Luria's and R. Hayyim Vital's disciples in 1575; old books; a talmudic compendium of Alfasi, printed in Venice in 1522; *Sefer ha-Tsoref* (1,400 pages, 22×35)—a manuscript written by the Shabbatean, R. Yehoshua-Heshel Tsoref; a manuscript, said to have been written by R. Yehudah Liva (Maharal) of Prague; and other writings.

'Accompanied by the granddaughter [of the Rebbe's wife]—so wrote the late David-Tsevi Bakhliniski—'I went down to the cellar and took out several files full of various letters. I now discovered that, when I had entered the cellar for the first time the year before, I had seen only the tenth or twentieth part of all the treasure hidden there. I estimate that there are there about a thousand letters and other writings of the leading hasidic figures of all periods.'

Thus were lost important original documents which could have provided valuable source-material for the study of Jewish history.

²⁰² Beigel, *op. cit.*, p. 78.

²⁰³ Zeevi, *op. cit.*, p. 140. Pinsker Shtime, 1938, N. 32 (577), p. 4.

²⁰⁴ Personal communications from two descendants of the Berezna dynasty, Rabbi A. Pichenik and Y. L. Yonathan. Unger, *op. cit.*, p. 231.

MANUSCRIPTS FROM THE STOLIN *GENIZAH* OF THE KARLIN DYNASTY

The asterisk (*) indicates that a copy of the original ms. is in the present author's possession.

*Aharon the Great of Karlin; His postscripts in the Nesvizh *pinkas*.

**Idem*; Letter to one of his hasidim about principles of hasidism.

Aharon the Second of Karlin, Proclamation on behalf of the Jewish community in the Holy Land.

**Idem*; Proclamation after buying the prayer-house in Tiberias, which had previously been erected by R. Mendel of Vitebsk.

**Idem*; Letter to Kozhenits hasidim.

Idem; A short prayer.

Idem; Letter to his hasidim about their payment to the 'court' fund.

**Idem*; Letter to his family about doctors [in the possession of his descendants].

**Idem*; Letter to his daughter Miryam and to his son-in-law R. Avraham-Yaakov [in the possession of his descendants].

**Idem*; Letter to his daughter Miryam and to his son-in-law R. Avraham-Yaakov of Sadagora (29.7.1866) [in the possession of his descendants].

Regulations of Mishnah-reading society in the town Yanovo, signed by R. Aharon the Second of Karlin (1830).

Deeds of sale relating to houses bought in R. Aharon's name in Jerusalem and Tiberias.

Letters to R. Aharon the Second of Karlin from the recipients of the *halukkah*, appointing him as the 'chief general administrator' of all the funds sent to the Holy Land and his son, R. Asher the Second of Stolin, as his assistant.

*Asher the First of Karlin; Letter to R. Yosef of Pinsk about the persecution of his followers.

**Idem*; Proclamation on behalf of the Jewish community in the Holy Land.

**Idem*; Letter to the *Tsaddik* R. Yisrael of Kozhenits [in original and a copy].

Idem; Letter to the salt merchants of Kremenets (Volhynia), that they should not desecrate the Sabbath.

Idem; Letter to one of his followers explaining the value of the hasidic-style prayers on *Rosh-Hashanah*.

Idem; Various letters to his son R. Aharon the Second about family affairs.

Idem; List of his books.

Idem; His lucky charms and other proved means of warding off illness.

Idem; Receipts for various sums of money sent by R. Asher to the Holy Land.

Idem; *Pinkasim* comprising testamentary and family matters.

*Asher the Second of Stolin; Letter signed by him

and sent to his hasidim [in the possession of A. Ben-Ezra].

Avraham of Kalisk; Letter to R. Nahum of Chernobyl about contributions of money for the Holy Land.

Avraham-Yehoshua-Heshel of Apta; Letter of New Year greetings to R. Asher the First of Karlin.

Idem; Letter about the ritual slaughterers of Olevsk (1810).

Barukh of Mezhibozh; Letter to a certain R. Yaakov-Shimon about the journey of a family to Rashkov (1810).

David Halevi of Stepan; Letter to the Jews of the town of Rokitno about their behaviour.

*Dov-Baer of Mezerich; Letter to R. Eliezer Halevi and R. Hayyim of Pinsk on behalf of R. Aharon the Great.

Hayyim Vital; Tract in manuscript, attributed to him.

Levi-Yitshak of Berdichev; Decision in the matter of a dispute between two Jews of Petrikov (1780).

Mordekhai of Chernobyl; Letter to R. Shemaryahu of Olevsk about the ritual slaughterer's licence.

*Mordekhai of Kremenets; Testament.

*Moshe-Yehudah-Leib of Sasov; Letter to the hasidim (1796).

*Pledge of loyalty [*shetar hitkhaskhruth*] given in 1575 in Safed by disciples of R. Yitshak Luria and R. Hayyim Vital.

*Resolutions in the *pinkas* of the Nesvizh community ((1769).

*Shelomo of Karlin; Letter to R. Aharon Segal of Vitebsk.

Shemuel-Avraham Shapiro of Slavuta; Reply to invitation to R. Aharon the Second of Karlin's wedding.

Yehiel-Mikhal of Zlochov; Letter.

Yehoshua-Heshel Tsoref, *Sefer Ha-Tsoref* [The Book of the Refiner], in manuscript.

**Op. cit.*; page 61.

**Op. cit.*; Forewords and Postscripts by the copyists of the manuscript.

Yisrael of Kozhenits; Letter to R. Asher the First of Karlin, after the death of the latter's wife.

Yisrael of Ruzhin; Friendly letter to R. Aharon the Second of Karlin (1848).

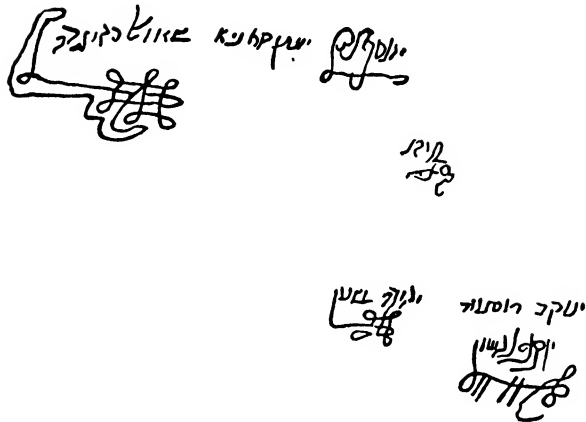
Idem; Letter to R. Aharon the Second of Karlin about the funds collected on behalf of the Jewish community in the Holy Land.

*Yisrael of Stolin; Testament to the family (1921). Copy belonged to a Stolin hasid closely associated with R. Yisrael of Stolin.

**Idem*; Testament to his hasidim (1921). Copy belonged to the above-mentioned hasid.

Deeds of sale relating to houses bought in R. Yisrael's name in Jerusalem and Tiberias.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE BY THE DISCIPLES OF THE ARI AND R. HAYYIM VITAL (1575) *



Signatures of the disciples of R. Yitshak Luria ('Ha-Ari') and R. Hayyim Vital (1575) [from the Stolin *genizah*]

'We the undersigned have pledged ourselves to form a single company to worship the Divine Name and study His Law day and night, as we shall be instructed by the perfect and divine Sage, the *Rav* and Teacher,

R. Hayyim Vital (may his light shine forth!), and we shall learn with him the true wisdom and be faithful in spirit, concealing all that he shall tell us, and we shall not trouble him by pressing him too much for things that he does not wish to reveal to us, and we shall not reveal to others any secret of all that we shall hear spoken in truth by his mouth, nor of all that he taught us in the past, nor even of what he taught us in the lifetime of our Teacher, the great *Rav*, R. Yitshak Luria Ashkenazi (of blessed memory) during all that time; and even what we heard from the lips of our Teacher, the above-named *Rav* (of blessed memory), we shall not be able to reveal without his permission, since we should not understand these things if he had not explained them to us. This pledge, taken under solemn oath in the Name of the Lord, concerns our Teacher, the above mentioned *Rav*, R. Hayyim (may his light shine forth!); and the duration of this pledge is from today for ten consecutive years. Today is the second day of the week, the 25th *Menahem Av*, 5335 of the creation [1575], here in Tsfath [Safed] (may it be built and established speedily in our days!); and all these words are clear and valid.'

'SEFER HA-TSOREF'

by R. Yehoshua Heshel Tsoref (born 1633, died 1700 or 1720)

Forewords by the Copyists of the Manuscript

'With God's help, the words of the first copyist. This is the *Sefer Ha-Tsoref* [The Book of the Refiner] which was found in the house of our Master, our Teacher the *Rav* Ribash [R. Yisrael Baal Shem] (of righteous and holy memory), and in which the following was written: This book was composed by the perfect and revered Sage, through whom the spirit of the Lord spoke and His word was on his lips, the Teacher R. Heshel Tsoref from the community of Krakov, who had a different spirit, as it is written: "A pure heart He has created for me," etc.; and from Heaven he was vouchsafed various wondrous and awesome mysteries, for all of which(?) he provided authority, *almost every single one of them being based on a small verse in the Torah, "Hear, O Israel!"* When

you, O reader, see them (God willing) in the original hand of the author and when you look at page 130, he [sc. you] will know from the contents of his manuscript that it is more than human intelligence. Especially as it is explained *how four volumes like these were written about the verse, Hear, O Israel!* Thus far what was written of the author. The father of the author was called R. Yosef, as explained on leaf 400, in the passage beginning with the words "You shall rule," at the end of the passage. There it is explained that the spirit of the Messiah revealed itself in him, as I was told by the talmudic scholar, the Teacher R. Shabbethai of Rashkov (may his memory be blessed!), on the authority of Ribash, in the following words: The year 1648 was the time of grace for the Lord... to create the soul of Messiah. And when, on account of our many iniquities, there was an accusation [sc. divine displeasure] against Israel (Heaven deliver us!), the author took upon himself to compose several books through an act of repentance that he then performed. See leaf 31 of the author's work;... and possibly page [?] referred to this. This book is the fourth part, as the author wrote in this book several times. The author was a refiner [i.e., goldsmith, Heb. *tsoref*], as he wrote on page 409, see there.

And the Teacher R. Shabbethai told me that the

*A copy of this Pledge of Allegiance was made in Stolin by the late David-Tsevi Bakhinski in 1937. The signatures were copied by him in ink on tracing paper. He reported that there were altogether about ten signatures, of which he copied only seven (see W. Z. Rabinowitsch, *Min ha-Genizah ha-Stolinaith*, Zion, Year 5, p. 123 ff., Jerusalem 1940; G. Sholem, *Shtar Hithkashruth shel Talmidei Ha-Ari*, *ibid.*, p. 133 ff.).

Ribash had intended to make a copy of it. The Ribash therefore gave it to him to copy out, but in the meantime the Ribash was summoned to heaven, and his son, R. Tsevi Hirsch (of blessed memory) came and took this book from his house, until eventually this book came into the hands of the son of R. Tsevi-Hirsch, the Sage R. Aharon (may his light shine forth!). He agreed with my Teacher, R. Yeshayahu Halevi, who was a *Maggid* in the community of Dinavits [i.e., Dunayevtsy], that a copy should be made of this book, when he saw that this precious work was in danger of being lost as the pages were becoming defaced. Then I, a young man sitting at the feet of the righteous, came forward and was ordered by the Teacher R. Yeshayahu to copy it out. He also sent me written instructions to copy it out letter by letter. After the usual greetings, he informed me that, when he was in the community of Kasnitin, he had seen the *Sefer Ha-Tsores* in the home of the learned scholar and Teacher R. Aharon, the grandson of the Besht, and had spoken with him about making a copy of that book and publishing it; also that he had mentioned there that I could copy it out; and that they had agreed that I should live in the house of R. Yeshayahu, both on Sabbaths and on weekdays. For the above-mentioned man had undertaken this in his presence gladly and most affectionately. A special room had been set aside for the writing, and if I was willing to go there, so much the better. Such were the contents of the letter written by the Teacher, the *Rav* and *Maggid*, R. Yeshayahu Halevi.

For several years from the time of R. Shabbethai of Rashkov I kept on thinking how I could succeed in carrying out this task of copying it [the book] letter by letter, as I have now done. When I saw the book, I found that it refers from leaf to leaf, so I decided to write it out leaf by leaf. Only, there was too much written on the leaf, so that it was impossible to copy it exactly leaf for leaf, and I therefore chose to transfer all the annotations on the page into the body of the text. Moreover, on every single page I marked off the annotations between two half moons, one like this (at the beginning, and one like this) at the end. And where I found yet another handwriting on the page, I marked it off from the first by a sign like this ((at the beginning, and like this)) at the end, to show that it was another handwriting. Subsequently, I discovered that *this was the handwriting of the author's son*, as is explained on leaf 230a (see there), and this writing was so old that it was almost effaced. But Heaven granted me the privilege to be its copyist, and with the help of the Lord, Whose loving kindness did not desert me or the learned author, I was given the strength and good eyesight to be able to copy it. Praise be to God who by His grace enabled me to see where mortal men cannot see, for the manuscript had been effaced by age. Also, the handwriting was very small, and without God's help it would have been impossible to copy it. But God was with me and helped me. I also

make grateful mention of the Sage, R. Aharon, the grandson of the Besht, who lent me the book to take to my home. For when I saw how great the work was and that the task could not be performed in a day, I was obliged by the pressure of the times to take the book home with me, since I could not be away from my home, for without flour there is no study [i.e., a scholar must earn enough to feed himself]. Blessed be He that has helped me thus far to copy it; and may the merits of the author, together with the merits of the *Rav* Ribash and of all the righteous ones who wished to have a copy made of this book, be my support, that I may be of those that worship the Lord with love and awe, according to His will. Such are the words of the first copyist, Yehoshua, the son of the Teacher Aharon of Dinavits, resident in the community of Dinavits.

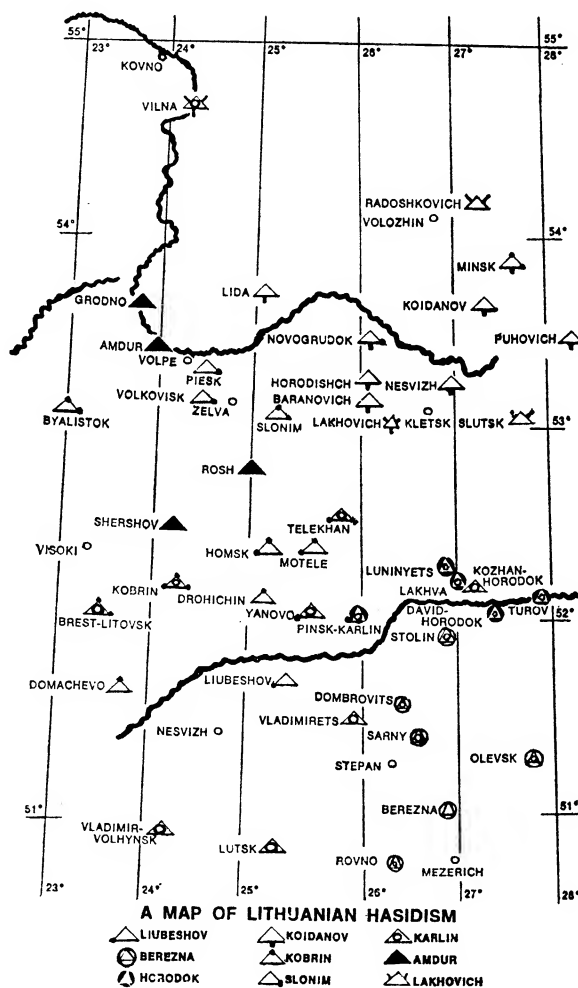
This book was also in the archives of the holy Teacher and Man of God, the *Rav* and *Maggid* of Chernobyl (of blessed and righteous memory) to whom it was left by his father the *Tsaddik*... who had copied it from the text that he found written in the house of the *Tsaddik* R. Yeshayahu Halevi of Dinavits; and after his death it was divided up by lots between three of his sons, since it was bound in three parts, the middle part being as large as both the first and last together. It was agreed between them that, if one of the sons wished to have it [sc. the whole book] copied out for himself, then the other two would give him their parts to be copied. The first to have a copy made was the renowned Teacher R. Aharon (long may he live!) the son of the above-mentioned *Rav*, by the copyist Mordekhai the son of Rivkah of Kovli [Kovel]. Next came his equally saintly brother... R. Moshe... who had the good fortune to receive by lot the middle part of his father's library; this Moshe had the first and last parts too copied out for himself, also by the above-named copyist, two being better than one... And now the third holy Sage to rouse himself [to the task] was the sons' kinsman, the *Rav* and Teacher R. Aharon of Karlin, who desired to have a copy of this book made for him, also by the above-named copyist; and since he was their kith and kin, he gladly, with their [sc. the sons'] permission placed this holy book in his library at the disposal of that copyist who lives here in Chernobyl. Moreover, since the middle part as divided up by lot among the brothers (may their righteousness protect us!) contains twice as many pages as the other parts, as can be seen from its thickness, and since it is hard to carry, the copyist divided it into two—the first time in the copy of the renowned Teacher R. Aharon, and again now, making twice altogether. All the parts appear pleasingly equal in size and evoke the admiration of all beholders for the excellent work, since they are all almost the same in shape and size and all together contain the pure teaching of the Lord, for they all form parts of one whole. By the merits of the author, may it speedily be granted us to say "Behold, this is our God! And may the reader

walk in the straight path and comprehend the words aright."

Postscripts by the Copyists

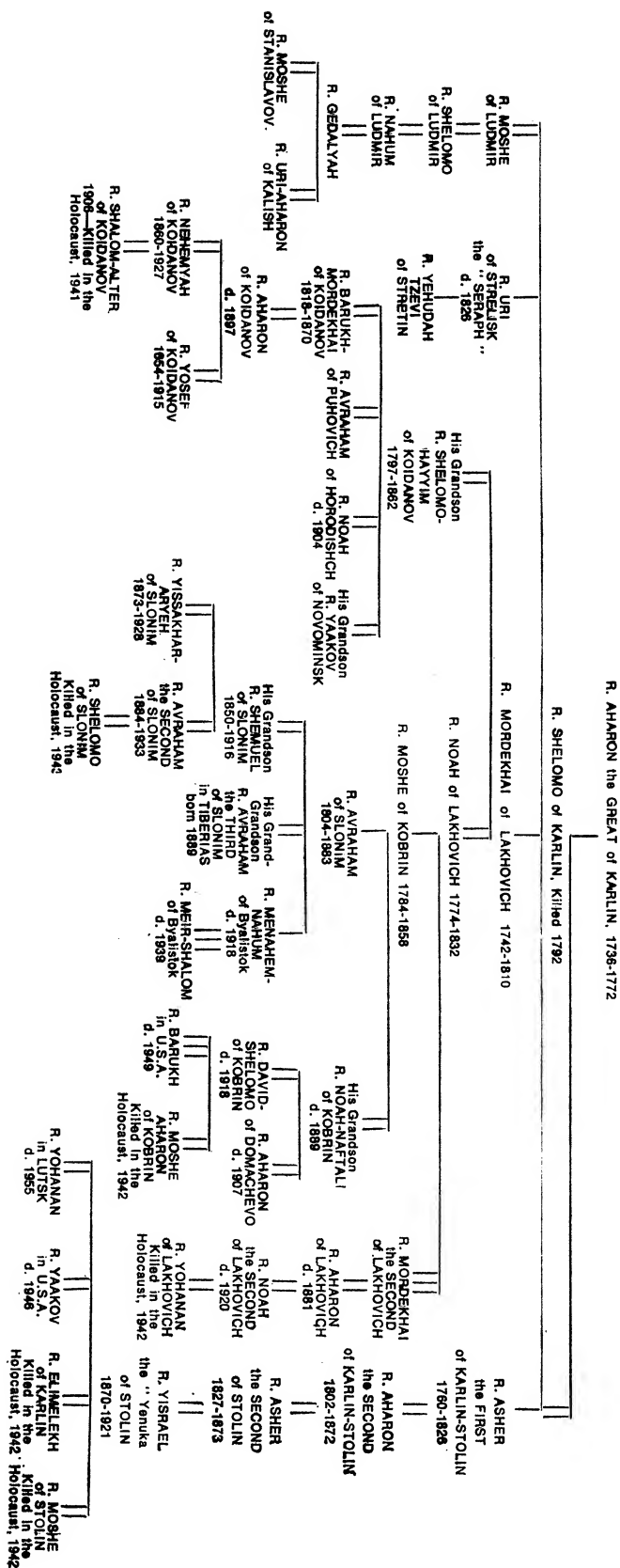
The first copyist declares: Thus far the manuscript of the author, the *Gaon* and Teacher, R. Yehoshua Heshel the son of R. Yosef of Krakov, and I have copied it as I found it and as I have explained at the beginning of the transcript. Therefore this is the end of this copy, which is the second copy, on the fifth day of the week, Portion of the Law *Reeh*, the 28th of the month *Menahem Av*, in this year [5]542 [=1782], by Yehoshua, the son of the Teacher and *Rav* R. Aharon (may his light shine forth!) of Dinavits, resident in the holy community of Dinavits.

And now I, the copyist Mordekhai, the son of Rivkah, offer praise to God Who has granted me to copy this, the fourth and last part of the *Sefer Ha-Tsores*, and has helped me to complete it. I trust that God will raise me up and again have mercy on me and speedily deliver us; and that the merit of the author will powerfully protect us, that we may not be found wanting in anything, for this book was divided into four parts on account of its size and thickness. May the merit of the author be with us for ever, that this book may be among the books of the righteous whose names are enshrined in this book; and we and our children and our children's children will worship the Lord and keep His commandments and laws and cleave to Him, Blessed Be He.



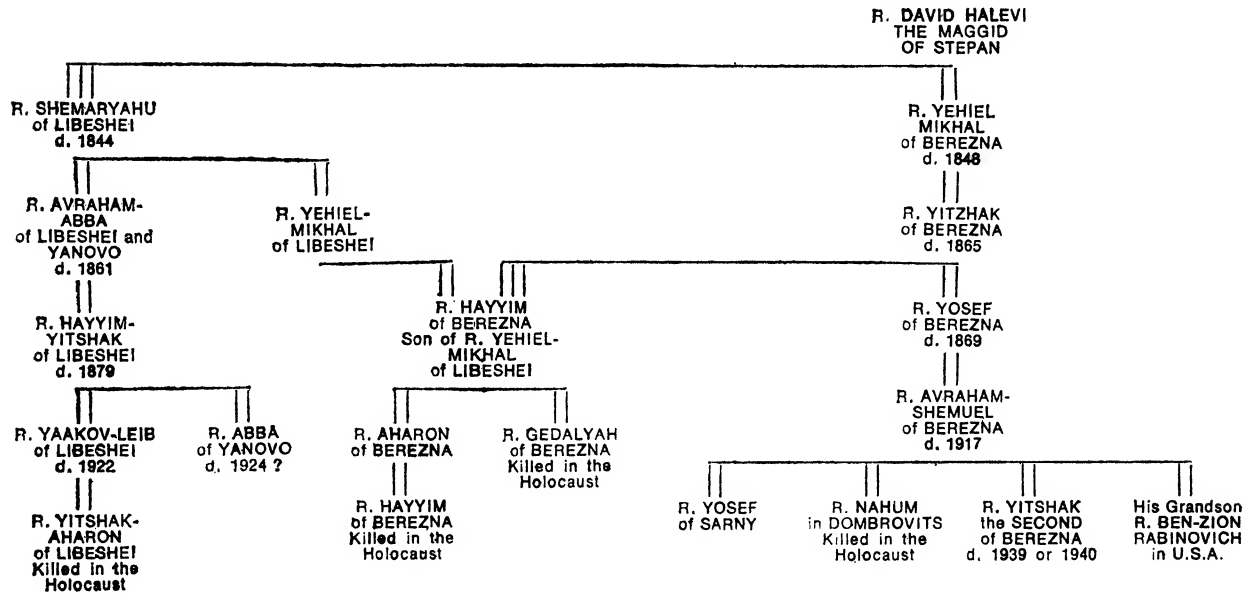
GENEALOGICAL TABLE OF THE KARLIN DYNASTY AND ITS BRANCHES THE CHRONOLOGICAL DETAILS CONCERNING THE TSADIKIM OF THE LAST GENERATIONS WERE PROVIDED BY THEIR DESCENDANTS

LEGEND : | DISCIPLE || SON, GRANDSON || SON-IN-LAW



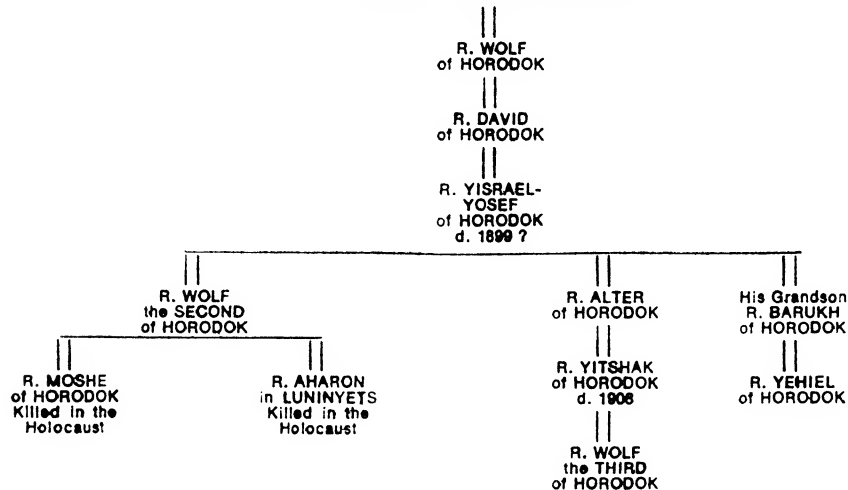
GENEALOGICAL TABLE OF THE LIBESHEI AND BEREZNA DYNASTIES

LEGEND: | DISCIPLE || SON, GRANDSON ||| SON-IN-LAW



HORODOK DYNASTY

R. SHEMUEL HALEVI of KOSHIVKA



MUSICAL SCORES OF HASIDIC MELODIES

Lyrical Sabbath Song by R. Aharon the Great of Karlin: 'Lord, I yearn for the Sabbath's delight'
'YAH, EKHSOF NOAM SHABBATH!'

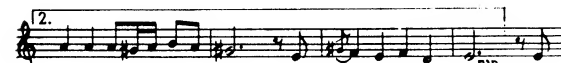
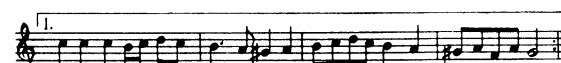
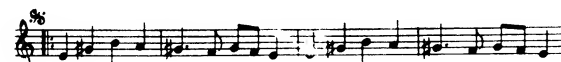
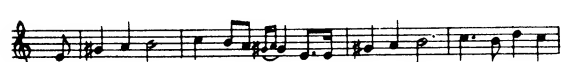
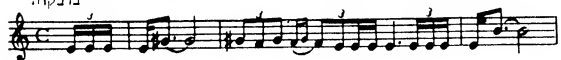
Karlin Melody

יה אכסוף נועם שבת

זמר לשבת לר' אהרן הגדול מקארלין

[מיוני קארלין ספר יהושע מירון, בן ר' מיכל אורבך מצפת, רשם משה ביק]

בדבקות



ראשי התיבות של שלוש המלים הראשונות לארבעת הבתים שבזמר
מצטרפים לשם הוי"ה, אהרן, נשמה.

יה אכסוף נועם שבת המתאמת ומיחדת בסגלתה.
משך נועם יראתה לעם מבקשי רצונה.
קדשם בקדשת השבת המתאחדת בתורתה.
שמת להם נועם ורצון לפתח שצרי רצונה.

יה אכסוף וכו'

היה הנה שומר שומרי ומצפים שבת קדשה.
כאיל תצא על אפיקי מים
נפשם תצא לקבל נועם שבת.
המתאחדת בשם קדשה.
הצל מצאנו לקרש מן השבת.
לבתי תהיה סגור מהם ששת ימים.
המקבלים קדשה בשבת קדשה.
וטהר לבם באמת ובאמונה לעבדה.

יה אכסוף וכו'

ויהיו רמסיף מהגוללים על עם קדשה.
להשקות צמאי סדנה בנהר היוצא מצדו.
לעטר את ישראל בתפארת.
המקראים אותה על ידי שבת קדשה.
כל-ששה ימים להנחילים גוללת נאקב בחירה.

יה אכסוף וכו'

השבת נועם הנשמות, ונשביצי ענג הרוחות
וצדן הנפשות להקצו צאצאיה ויראיה.
שבת קדש נפשי חולת אהבתה.
שבת קדש נפשות ישראל
בצל כנסיה נחסיין.
קריון מרשן ביתה.

יה אכסוף וכו'

אשת חיל

ניגון שמחת תורה לאחר הקפות

[מיוני קארלין, ספר יהושע מירון, בן ר' מיכל אורבך מצפת, רשם משה ביק]



'ESHET HAYIL'

'A Woman of Worth', from Proverbs 31

Karlin Melody

On Simhath Torah in the evening after the 'circuits'
of the Scrolls (hakkafoth).

The image displays a musical score for the song "Hallelujah" by Shalom Shulay. It consists of eight staves of music. The first four staves are vocal lines, and the last four are piano accompaniment. The music is written in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. The lyrics are in Hebrew, and the score includes both vocal and piano parts.

Vocal Lines (Hebrew Lyrics):

- Staff 1: קָא נִי - ל - צִי - הֵּ קָא נִי - ל - צִי - הֵּ
- Staff 2: עֵי - יָד - מֵי קוֹי אֶ - יָד - מֵי
- Staff 3: כִּי - נִי - אֶ רָא כִי - נִי - אֶ רָא כִי - נִי - אֶ רָא
- Staff 4: נִי - כִּי - הֵּ וּ בּוֹא - וְ סוֹ תוֹ אֶ
- Staff 5: מֵר - אֶ קוֹה - אֶ וְ נִים קֵץ עַל אִם
- Staff 6: טִיב טִיב הֵּי אֶ טִיב

Piano Accompaniment:

- Staff 7: The piano accompaniment begins with a series of chords and single notes, providing a harmonic foundation for the vocal lines.
- Staff 8: The piano accompaniment continues with a melodic line that often mirrors the vocal melody, featuring eighth and sixteenth notes.

GLOSSARY

ADAR: Jewish month, corresponding to February–March.

ADMOR: Leader and teacher of the hasidim. See also: Tsaddik, Rebbe.

AGGADAH: All that part of talmudic literature which consists of edificatory stories and legends.

AM HA-ARETS: A Jew with no knowledge of Jewish matters, contrasted with a talmudic scholar.

ARI: Abbreviation of Ashkenazi R. Yitshak (Luria) of Safed, leading kabbalist and mystic.

AV: Jewish month, corresponding to July–August.

AV BETH-DIN: Head of the rabbinical court of law.

AZHAROTH: Exhortations.

BAAL SHEM: 'Master of the Name'—a man able to perform miracles through the name of God.

BAAL SHEM TOV: 'Master of the Good Name,' the name given to R. Yisrael ben Eliezer, the founder of hasidism; the Besht.

BE-HAALOTHKHA: Weekly Portion of the Law, beginning with the words, 'When you set up the lamps' (Num. 8, 1).

BESHT: See Baal Shem Tov.

BETH-DIN: Rabbinical court.

BETH MIDRASH, pl. BATEI MIDRASH: House of worship and study.

CHERVONTSY: A Russian coin.

DAYAN: Judge of rabbinical court; Jewish judge.

DEVEKUTH: Intensity of devotion.

DIVREI TORAH: Discourse on a topic of (hasidic) doctrine, usually based on a scriptural passage, which the *Tsaddik* would deliver at the communal meal with his hasidim.

ELUL: The month preceding the New Year and Day of Atonement. It is devoted to self-examination and soul-searching in preparation for the divine judgement. Corresponds to September–October.

ERETS YISRAEL: Palestine, 'The Land of Israel'.

GABBAI: An honorary officer of a synagogue or other communal institution who acts as treasurer; amongst the hasidim, he also assists the Rebbe.

GALUTH: The dispersion of the Jews in exile.

GAON, pl. GEONIM: Honorific title of address for any outstanding talmudic scholar; applied in particular to R. Eliyahu of Vilna.

GEMARA: That part of the *Talmud* which consists of discussions of the *Mishnah*.

GENIZAH: Depository in which Hebrew books and documents were placed for safe-keeping.

GOLAH: The Jewish Diaspora.

HABAD: The hasidic movement founded by R. Shneur-Zalman of Ladi.

HAGGAHOTH: Annotations.

HAKKAFOTH: Circuits made in the synagogue with the Scrolls of the Law on *Simhath Torah*.

HALAKHAH, pl., HALAKHOTH: A legal regulation prescribed by the Written and Oral Law.

HALAKHIC: Belonging to *halakhah* (q.v.).

HALUKKAH: Contributions raised from among the Jews of the Diaspora and distributed as charity to the Jewish poor of the Holy Land.

HANHAGOTH YESHAROTH: Rules of Right Conduct.

HANUKKAH: The Feast of Lights, commemorating the victory of the Maccabees.

HASKALAH: The 19th century enlightenment movement for the modernisation of Jewish life.

HATSOTH: Midnight lamentation in memory of the destruction of the Temple.

HAVDALAH: Benediction recited at the close of Sabbaths and Festivals.

HAZZAN: Synagogue cantor; reader of prayers.

HEDER: (Religious) school.

HEREM: Religious excommunication; social boycott.

HESHVAN: Month of Jewish year, corresponding to October–November.

HEVRAH KADDISHA: Burial society.

HOSHANA RABBAH: The 7th day of *Sukkoth*, on which the willow branches—a part of the 'Four Kinds'—are stripped of their leaves.

HOVATH HA-LEVAVOTH: 'The Hearts' Duty', a book of Jewish religious philosophy.

ILANA DE-TSADDIKAYA: The Genealogical Tree of the *Tsaddikim*.

IYYAR: Month of the Jewish year, corresponding to April–May.

KABBALAH: Esoteric lore of Jewish mysticism.

KAHAL: A Jewish community and its administration.

KASHER: Ritually clean; permitted as food by the Mosaic Law.

KASHRUTH: Ritual purity; observance of dietary laws.

KAVVANAH: Intensity of mental concentration and emotional devotion in the utterance of a prayer or in the performance of a religious act; the mystical meaning of prayer.

KEHILLAH: Jewish community.

KIDDUSH: Benediction pronounced over wine on Sabbaths and Festivals.

KISLEV: Month of Jewish year, corresponding to November–December.

KITTEL: Long white robe, worn on *Rosh-Hashanah* and *Yom Kippur* and on the *Seder* night; also used as cereament.

KOL NIDREI: 'All Vows'—the initial words in the solemn formula of absolution, intoned in the synagogue on the eve of the Day of Atonement.

KOLEL: Organised division of Jewish community in Palestine for receipt of *halukkah*.

KOROBKA: (Russian) Communal tax on meat and other commodities in the Russian Jewish communities. Cf. *Pinkas Medinath Lita*, ed. Dubnow, p. 340, s.v.: *Kropkee*, Berlin 1925.

KUNTRES, pl., KUNTRESIM: Tract.

LAG BA-OMER: 33rd day of the counting of the *omer* (from the second day of Passover); a day of rejoicing.

MAARIV: Evening prayer.

MAGGID: Preacher, often itinerant; hasidic teacher.

MAHASHAVAH: Thought.

MASKIL: Active supporter of *haskalah* movement (q.v.).

MASORAH: Traditional Jewish way of life.

MATSAH: pl., MATSOTH: Unleavened bread eaten at Passover.

MEAH SHEARIM: Quarter of Jerusalem, occupied by ultra-orthodox Jews.

MEDINAH, MEDINATH: Province, State.

MELAMMED, pl., MELAMMEDIM: Teacher of children.

MELAVVEH MALKAH: The meal taken by the hasidim after the departure of the 'Queen Sabbath', accompanied by community singing and often an address by the *Tsaddik*.

MIDRASH: Allegorical exegesis of Biblical texts.

MIKRA: Bible.

MIKVEH: Ritual bath.

MINHAH: Afternoon prayer.

MINYAN: Prayer quorum of ten adult males.

MISHNAH: The earliest part of the *Talmud*.

MISNAGDIM: See Mithnagdim.

MITHNAGDIM: The opponents of hasidism.

MITNAGED, pl., MITHNAGEDIM: See Mithnagdim.

MITHNAGGEDIM: See Mithnagdim.

MITSAH, pl., MITSVOTH: Religious injunction.

MIZRAHI: Zionist organisation of orthodox Jews.

MOREH TSEDEK: Rabbinical judge.

MUSAR: Movement stressing moral values.

NER TAMID: Perpetual light.

NIGGUN: Melody; tune. *Ha-Niggun ha-Kadosh*: The holy tune.

NIGLEH: The written and oral law, as codified in the *Talmud*.

NISAN: Jewish month, corresponding to March–April.

NISTAR: Hidden lore of the *Kabbalah*.

OHEL: Structure over a grave.

OMER: Sheaf taken from the first fruits and offered in the temple (Lev. xxiii, 9–14). See Lag Ba-Omer.

PERUSHIM: Groups of disciples of the *Gaon* R. Eliyahu of Vilna in the Holy Land.

PESAH: Passover, the spring Festival commemorating the Exodus from Egypt.

PINKAS: Communal register; private notes.

PINKAS VAAD HA-KEHILLOTH HA-RASHIYOTH DI-MEDINATH LITA or PINKAS MEDINATH LITA: Register of the principal communities of the Province of Lithuania.

POLOZHENIYE: (Russian) Laws affecting Jews promulgated by the Russian Government.

PORITS: Gentile aristocrat and estate owner.

POSEKIM: Authors of halakhic rulings.

PURIM: Festival commemorating the deliverance of the Jews recorded in Book of Esther.

RABBI: General term for Jewish scholar.

RAV, pl., RABBANIM: Teacher of the Law; Jewish judge, and spiritual head of the community.

REBBE: A hasidic *Tsaddik* is designated as 'Rebbe' as distinct from the Rabbi proper or the *Rav*, who discharges the rabbinical functions as spiritual leader of the whole community.

ROSH HA-KAHAL, pl., RASHIM: Head of the community.

ROSH-HASHANAH: New Year Festival.

ROSH HODESH: New Moon.

ROSH YESHIVAH: Head of a talmudic school.

ROZEN, pl., ROZENIM: Communal leader.

SEDER: The service commemorating the Exodus, conducted in the home on the eve of Passover.

SEFER ZIKKARON: Memorial Volume.

SHABBATH KODESH: Holy Sabbath.

SHAMASH: Caretaker and usher; Rebbe's servant.

SHAVUOTH: 'Festival of Weeks', commemorating the Giving of the Law and the ingathering of the first fruits.

SHEMA: 'Hear O Israel', the Jewish profession of faith, recited daily in the morning and evening prayers.

SHETAR HITHKASHRUTH: Pledge of loyalty.

SHIDDUKH: Negotiations preliminary to marriage; a marriage agreement; a match.

SHOFAR: Ram's horn, blown in the synagogue on *Rosh-Hashanah*.

SHOHET: Ritual slaughterer.

SHTIEBEL: Name given to hasidic prayer-house.

SHULHAN ARUKH: Codification of halakhic law.

SHULKHEN: Small prayer-house.

SIDDUR: Prayer-book.

SIMHAH: Rejoicing; joy; happy occasion.

SIMHATH TORAH: 'Rejoicing of the Law'—joyous Festival on the day following *Sukkoth*.

SIVAN: Jewish month, corresponding to May–June.

SUKKAH: Booth, tabernacle.

SUKKOTH: Festival of Tabernacles, commemorating the wandering in the desert and the fruit harvest.

TAANITH ESTHER: Fast on the day before *Purim*.

'TABLE': Festive communal meal of the hasidim at which the *Tsaddik* delivered an address.

TAKANAH, pl., TAKANOTH: Measure, enactment.

TALITH, pl., TALITHOTH: Prayer-shawl.

TALMUD: *Mishnah* and *Gemara*.

TALMUD TORAH: Communal school.

TAMMUZ: Jewish month, corresponding to June-July.
 TANYA: Hasidic philosophical work by R. Shneur-Zalman of Ladi.
 TASHLIKH: Ceremonial purification from sin on the New Year.
 TEREFAH: Ritually unclean food.
 TEVETH: Jewish month, corresponding to December-January.
 'THIRD MEAL': The Sabbath meal, eaten after the *minhah* prayer and accompanied by hasidic community singing and an address by the *Tsaddik*.
 TISHRI: Jewish month, corresponding to September-October.
 TORAH: The Mosaic Law; the teaching of Judaism.
 TOSAFOTH: Exegetical annotation to the *Talmud*.
 TSADDIK: Head and teacher of a hasidic community.
 TSADDIKISM: Personal cult of the *Tsaddik*.
 TSAVAAH: Will; testament.

TSOREF: Refiner, purifier.
 VAAD HA-MEDINAH: Council of the Province.
 VA-YAKHEL: Portion of the Law beginning with the words 'And Moses assembled' (Exod. 35, 1).
 VIDDUY: Confession of sins.
 YAMIM NORAIM: Penitential Days; Days of Awe.
 'YENUKA': Child chosen by hasidim as their future leader; Rebbe.
 YESHIVAH, pl., YESHIVOTH: High school for study of *Talmud*.
 YETSER HA-RA: Evil inclination.
 YIRAH: Religious awe.
 YIZKOR: Memorial (Volume).
 YOM KIPPUR: Day of Atonement, a day of fasting and repentance.
 ZEMIROT: Liturgical songs.
 ZOHAR: 'Book Of Splendour', the chief work of the earlier *Kabbalah* and of Jewish mysticism.

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